

# AIR FORCE NEWS

Mountainous  
communications

Tactical flights  
in the States

Farewelling  
Her Majesty

#252

NOV | 22



An eye for  
heights

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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.

#### COVER:

An eye for heights

#### PHOTOGRAPHER:

CPL Naomi James



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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government

# First Word



**B** | AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND  
**Y** | BRETT MARSHALL, DIRECTOR

**“Spend time at the Roll of Honour and acknowledge the names of those whose memory we treasure and whose wairua (spirit) flows through the Museum.”**

**H**ave you ever written something and wondered if it will be read or even if it would be worthy to be read? I sat with this thought when asked to write this month's First Word. I also wrestled with what to write. What would I want you, who are currently reading this, to leave thinking, feeling, pondering? How could I possibly compete with the pictures of aircraft on the following pages subliminally calling to you? I then thought that maybe I was overthinking.

I've been at the Museum for almost six years and Director for just over three – and what an “interesting” past three years they have been.

One term that has become part of our vocabulary in recent years is Managed Isolation. It made me reflect on the physical isolation of the Museum, due to our remoteness from our RNZAF Bases, and the disconnectedness myself and Museum staff sometimes feel from the wider RNZAF. This First Word however is an opportunity to overcome that in a small way and connect with you.

When we think of our Air Force many words come to mind and one of those is “service”. When you join the Air Force as an aviator you do so to serve your country. The Museum exists to tell that story of service – your story. And in telling that story I want to highlight the service of all the staff here at the Museum.

The average period of time that the current staff have worked at the Museum is over nine years. Our newest staff member started in recent months and a number have been here for over 20 years with one having been here since before the Museum opened in 1987.

In addition to our staff are our wonderful volunteers who assist in the workshop or engage with our visitors. They all dedicate themselves, and significant amounts of their lives, to ensure that the story of our Air Force, your story, is told both online and to the over 150,000 (pre-Covid level) physical visitors per year.

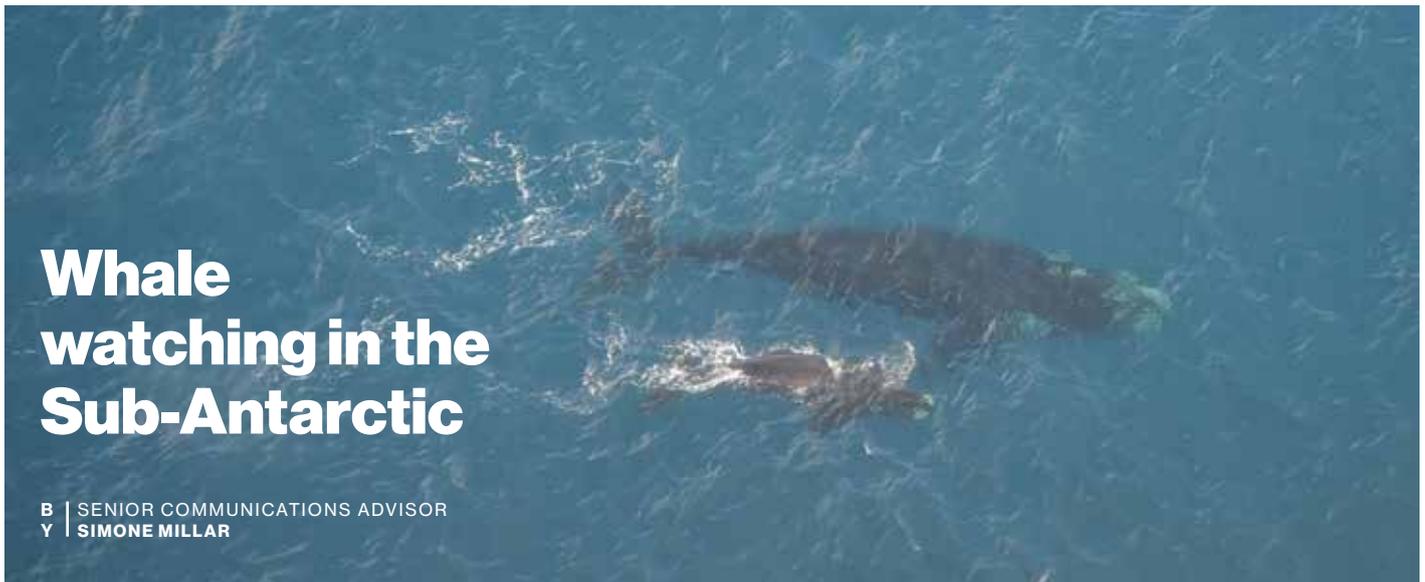
So next time you are planning a trip to Christchurch, please consider visiting your Museum.

Spend time at the Roll of Honour and acknowledge the names of those whose memory we treasure and whose wairua (spirit) flows through the Museum. Over 70 names have been added since I joined the Air Force in 1986 – many of them friends of mine and no doubt friends to many of you as well.

If you have no trip planned then consider connecting through our website [www.airforcemuseum.co.nz](http://www.airforcemuseum.co.nz). There you can sign up to our monthly newsletter to keep in touch, purchase some of the bespoke RNZAF themed merchandise to support your Museum and browse the over 30,000 online images (increasing daily). You might even find yourself – an image of yourself that is.

In closing I hope my offering of words has given you pause to think about your Museum. For the select few or you that have read to the end, thank you, and I hope some of you choose to connect with your Museum.

Waiho I te toipoto, kua I te toiroa – let us keep close together, not far apart.



# Whale watching in the Sub-Antarctic

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



**“Press the pickle switch if you see a whale!” was an important part of the brief, for the crew of P-3K2 Orion. The No. 5 Squadron crew was out and about patrolling the Southern Ocean last month, and although surveillance flights around the area are conducted about three times a year, this trip had whale spotting on the agenda.**

**F**lying counter-clockwise at 1000ft over Campbell Island and the Auckland Islands, the crew observers spotted up to 50 southern right whales, logging the location of the sightings with the ‘pickle switch’ in three sub-areas around the islands.

The flight was an opportunity to count and collect identification photos of southern right whales at the Sub-Antarctic Islands for the Department of Conservation (DoC) at the end of the winter season, before the whales head to open ocean for the rest of the year. The information collected is vital for researchers to understand how the whales use the islands as their population continues to recover from whaling.

“On the P-3K2, we spend a lot of time looking at the ocean and it’s always a bit of a kick when you spot a whale or a pod of dolphins, so to be tasked with something like whale counting is quite fun, as well as rewarding. It’s also challenging because unlike land-based targets, whales move!” says the captain, Flight Lieutenant Jade Telford-Simms.

“Knowing that we are contributing to something like whale conservation is a bit left field for a military entity - but it really speaks to the flexibility of the aircraft and the crew,” she says.

The flight was also conducted to collect surveillance information of DoC hut facilities on the islands and patrolling fishing vessels operating in the area.

It was one of the last flights the Orion P-3K2s will undertake in the Southern Ocean, before the arrival of the new P-8A Poseidon fleet of maritime surveillance aircraft.

**TOP**  
Southern right whale and calf.

**BOTTOM LEFT**  
FLTLT Jade Telford Simms.

**BOTTOM MIDDLE**  
No. 5 Squadron crew monitors screens to catch sight of whale pods.

**BOTTOM RIGHT**  
Juvenile southern right whale. While uncommon, it’s not unusual for southern right whales to have large white patches, sometimes most of their body such as this.



## Orion Fiji SAR success

**B** | EDITOR  
**Y** | REBECCA QUILLIAM

**Crew in a P-3K2 Orion extended their working hours to ensure the safety of three adults and a child who had been drifting at sea for nearly three days.**

**T**he boat was found by the No. 5 Squadron crew about 20 nautical miles from Kia Island, off the North Coast of Vanua Levu, Fiji. The search and rescue mission, at the start of last month, saw the aircrew work a 19-hour day.

The group on board the boat had been missing for about two days when the P-3K2 crew left Base Auckland and flew to Fiji's Nadi Airport to refuel, before leaving for the search area, Air Warfare Specialist Sergeant (SGT) Darion Ings said.

Working with the Rescue Coordination Centre Fiji and Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand, the crew searched for the vessel using both the aircraft radar and a visual search at 1,000ft.

"We ended up finding them in three hours and 58 mins," SGT Ings said.

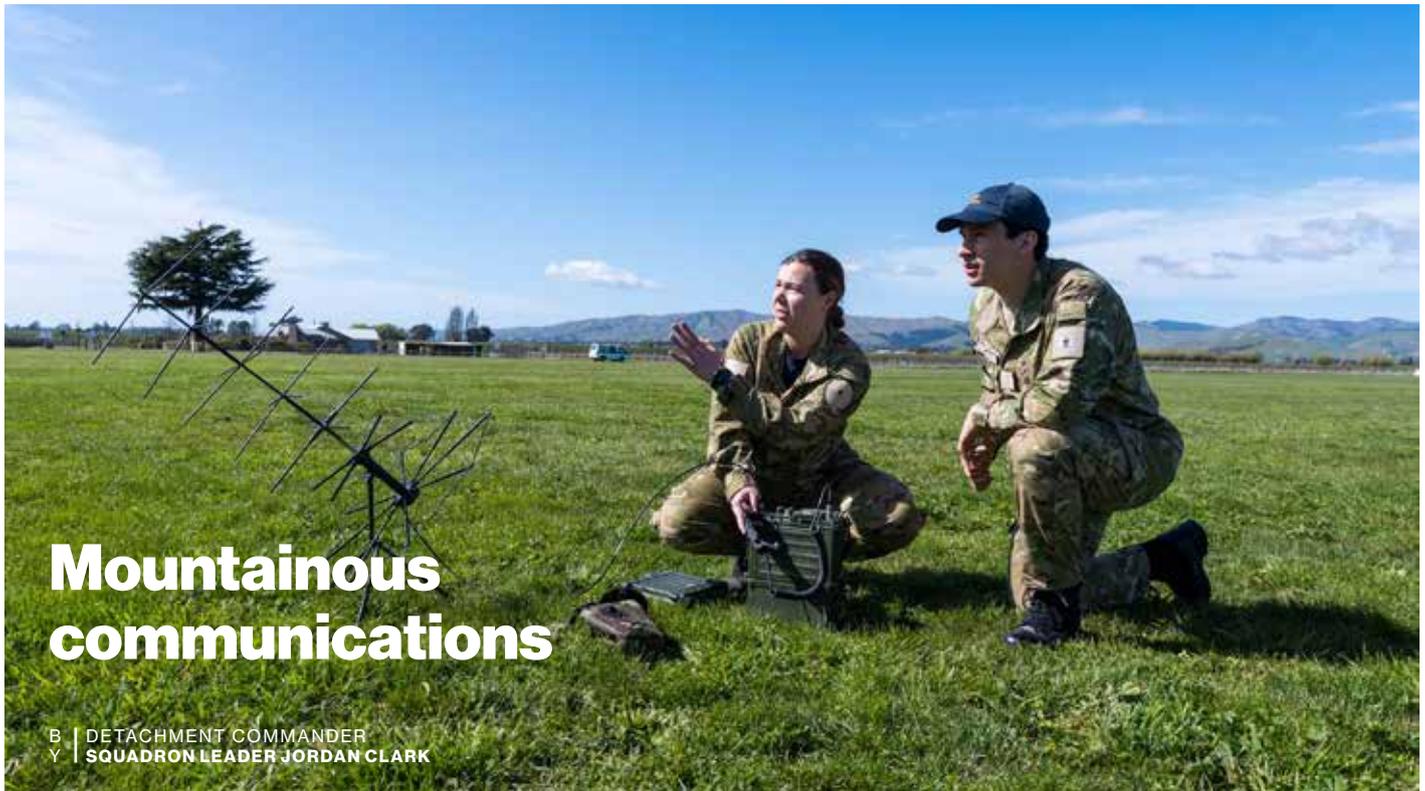
The vessel had a makeshift sail and shelter in place. The crew dropped a survival pack with a radio, torch, food, water and cyalume glow sticks to those on board.

They then made contact with a Fiji tugboat, Bandicoot, about 96km away, which eventually made it to the boat and took the survivors to shore.

"After making contact with the tugboat we went back to the survivors and circled them for as long as we could to keep an eye on them. The Fijian Police boat also travelled out to the area, but the tugboat arrived first.

"Our crew duty ended up being extended to a 19-hour day. We weren't able to be there for the rendezvous, but we pushed it out solely because the crew wanted to stay as long as possible because there was a child on board," SGT Ings said.

"There was a sense of elation in the aircraft when the survivors were found. It's definitely a satisfying part of the job."



# Mountainous communications

B | DETACHMENT COMMANDER  
Y | SQUADRON LEADER JORDAN CLARK

**Members of No. 230 Squadron (Mission Support Squadron) recently deployed to Dip Flat at the base of the St Arnaud Range to conduct a communications and intelligence exercise.**

It was a unique opportunity for the squadron to run its own training without being part of a larger exercise supporting other Defence Force force elements. The exercise was named after the Haast Eagle (Pouākai) which is represented on the No. 230 Squadron Crest.

The exercise was the first iteration of a planned biennial exercise and was a key enabler in order to maintain the squadron's Directed Level of Capability. The primary objective was the integration of the two largest flights of No. 230 (Mission Support) Squadron, being the Communications and Information Systems Flight (CISF) and the Intelligence Flight (INTF).

Over two weeks the team exercised their core roles, including setting up and maintaining deployed classified environments, debriefing notional aircrew post-mission, creating intelligence products in support of both notional Defence Force operations and the wider detachment, and supporting a notional Rotary Wing Task Force with various communication bearers.

For most of the intelligence detachment, this was their first exercise since coming off their junior trade training. I was really impressed to see junior members of our squadron getting involved with the scenario as well as consolidating the training they received in Woodbourne at the new Air Intelligence School.

From a Communications and Information Systems perspective, the exercise gave an excellent opportunity for our teams to regenerate our deployed tradecraft after the Covid constraints.

There was a deliberate focus on how we support rotary wing operations and some of the difficulties faced when operating high frequency (HF) communications in a mountainous environment. The training scenario saw the three CIS detachments set up a multitude of antennas to assess how they operate at different heights, distance, and also over the sunset and sunrise period which has significant impact on HF communications. By providing our aviators regular opportunities to experience these conditions in a training environment they are better prepared when deployed to support operational aircraft.



### The Intelligence Perspective

I enjoyed the experience on Exercise Haast Eagle. It was my first exposure to many of the fresh OPINT Intelligence Specialists, and so it was very interesting to see the level of training delivered by the Air Intelligence School (AIS) at Base Woodbourne. It was a real testament to the instructors at AIS, who have clearly done an excellent job creating a base level of training that can equip our junior personnel with the skills required to be an integral part of an intelligence team supporting Defence Force operations.

Personally, the chance to further develop my own leadership skills as a team lead, and provide some coaching and mentoring to the next generation of intelligence specialist was really cool. Due to the small team sizes we have when posted to operational squadrons, it's not often chances to lead larger team's crop up.

Simple things, like seeing the immediate impact that a quick feedback session after a brief had on the outputs of the team was super rewarding. I'm glad I had the opportunity to deploy to Dip Flat on the exercise and to get to see our newest generation in their element producing some high-quality intelligence products in some challenging environments.

– Leading Aircraftman, SINTELS

### The Communications and Information Systems (CIS) Perspective

The exercise was an amazing experience. Our detachment was deployed to Dip Flat and tasked with maintaining multiple IT Networks for intelligence to operate, while also maintaining multiple radio networks, including MILSATCOM, utilising a satellite and HF utilising the ionosphere to “fight for comms” to our two other deployed detachments in Takaka and Westport respectively.

The locations of the other teams meant we had to think on our feet and make changes to both our antennae and frequencies as we operated through the night, with the odd spanner thrown in the works, forcing our team to adjust on the fly. It was a great opportunity to get back into the field and get to work with an unfamiliar team.

It was inspiring to see how both trades integrated and being the first squadron exercise including both intelligence and CIS for some time it was awesome to see how fluid it felt, and I would be happy to deploy again.

– Corporal, CIS technician

**“By providing our aviators regular opportunities to experience these conditions in a training environment they are better prepared when deployed to support operational aircraft.”**

– Squadron Leader Jordan Clark

# Advanced flying tactics training in United States

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR  
Y | SIMONE MILLAR



**No. 40 Squadron crews have recently undertaken advanced tactics training with the United States Air Force (USAF) in Missouri, Arizona and Alaska.**

Aircrews attended the Advanced Airlift Tactical Training Centre (AATTC) in the vicinity of St Josephs, Missouri and Sierra Vista, Arizona, with a C-130 Hercules, to develop the crew's proficiency in conducting tactical missions in austere environments for when those skills are required by the New Zealand Government.

"The AATTC course allowed our crews to practise advanced tactical flying in a simulated hostile environment. This included low-level flying, airdrops, and threat reaction," Detachment Commander, Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Adam Palmer said.

High quality training activities were essential for Defence Force personnel so they could be ready to respond, increase emergency preparedness and enhance response capabilities.

Training with partner nations allows Aotearoa New Zealand to integrate capabilities, build interoperability and execute complex and realistic operations as a combined team.

The Air Force had participated in the annual joint training since 1996 and FLTLT Palmer said operating in a deployed environment with other militaries was a great way to train personnel, so they had the skills to operate in any location in the world.

The training also provided consolidation and standardisation of Air Force tactics with those of the United States Air National Guard and Air Mobility Command.



“This training was really significant, as it provided an opportunity to operate with the USAF in a deployed environment. It also provided an opportunity to learn from, and build relationships with USAF Air Mobility Command and Air National Guard crews,” FLTLT Palmer said.

Immediately following the AATTC course, crews flew north to Alaska to continue honing their skills.

Exercise Red Flag-Alaska 23-1, was held at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, just outside Anchorage.

The exercise was designed to continue to develop crews’ proficiency in conducting advanced tactical flying missions in austere environments in preparation for operations.

“Exercise Red Flag aims to maximise combat readiness, capability and survivability by providing aircrews with realistic training in a combined air and ground threat environment,” Detachment Commander Squadron Leader (SQNLDR) Kendall Dooley said.

Training included threat evasion, airdrop, landing and taking off from semi-prepared strips, escort co-ordination, dissimilar air combat and Airborne Early Warning and Control integration.

It was the first time since 2018 that the Air Force had been able to attend the exercise because of Covid-19.

“The training also helps us build interoperability and execute complex and realistic operations with our military partners,” SQNLDR Dooley said.

#### LEFT

No. 40 Squadron crew conducts training around St Josephs, Missouri and Sierra Vista, in Arizona.

#### MIDDLE LEFT

FLTLT Lachlan Newbery conducts a familiarisation flight over the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex.

#### MIDDLE RIGHT

FGOFF Ben Pickering taking part in the training around St Josephs, Missouri and Sierra Vista, in Arizona.

#### RIGHT

F/S Nathan Hodges conducts a pre-flight inspection.

Photos: USAF



**“It’s great to be back working with our partners on high-quality training. It really helps increase our readiness and response capabilities.”**

**– Squadron Leader Kendall Dooley**





## An eye for heights

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR  
Y | KIRSTY LAWRENCE

**No. 3 Squadron recently returned to Dip Flat for its mountain flying training. The inclement Spring weather tested the team, but despite nature's challenges, they were able to pack as much training in as possible.**

**“We are always reprioritising what we are looking to achieve with what we have got, it’s pretty normal in that sense to say we have a number one priority, with a couple of secondary priorities.”**

**- Flight Lieutenant Lindsay Johnstone**

With helicopter work being weather dependent there are always variables involved, and this year’s Blackbird exercise encountered just that.

Running at the end of September, bad weather meant crews had to pivot from their original plans, and prioritise what they wanted to achieve in the small windows of fine weather.

While the NH90 helicopters flew day trips down and back from Base Ōhakea to the Dip Flat area, the A109 fleet flew to Base Woodbourne and based itself there for the week.

No. 3 Squadron LUH Utility Section Commander Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Lindsay Johnstone said while the weather obviously curtailed about half of what they had wanted to do, they did still manage to achieve some key objectives.

“We went down on Tuesday, flew Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday, but Thursday was on the ground all day and Friday was no good for flying, but we got the choppers home that afternoon.”

FLTLT Johnstone said it wasn’t uncommon in the mountains for weather to impact flying.

“We can do mountain flying locally as well, we don’t have to do it on Blackbird because we have access to the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges.

“We can meet the currencies we need doing it that way when the opportunity presents itself.”

For the A109 the main priority for this Blackbird was to upgrade one of their pilots to be a mountain captain.

“We still achieved that.”

After that it was focussing on exposure and currencies, in which FLTLT Johnstone said they did what they wanted to do.

“We are always reprioritising what we are looking to achieve with what we have got, it’s pretty normal in that sense to say we have a number one priority, with a couple of secondary priorities. Then you react to the situation you have got based on those priorities, so it was reasonably similar for us in this case.”

FLTLT Johnstone said the primary reason they conducted mountain flying was for national contingency responses, such as for search and rescue missions, but there were often times where weather was a factor as well.

“It’s just the reality of mountain flying.”



**TOP**

No. 3 Squadron mountain-flying training.

**BOTTOM LEFT**

No. 3 Squadron mountain-flying training.

**BOTTOM RIGHT**

Aerial view of Dip Flat.





# Operation London Bridge: The Commonwealth farewells the Queen

WORDS  
ANDREW BONALLACK

PHOTOGRAPHY  
CORPORAL DILLON ANDERSON

## On 19 September, the New Zealand Defence Force marched in the funeral procession for Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in London.

It seemed improbable that a building complex in Westminster could accommodate 1600 uniformed personnel, but the Wellington Barracks, home to the British Army's infantry regiments of the Household Division, effortlessly took them in. Across the parade ground, two Gurkhas in multi-terrain pattern dress stood ready to open the gates that the troops, when formed up, marched through to take part in their last service to the late Queen.

Tucked away at one end of the parade ground was a large white marquee housing the New Zealand, Australian and Canadian personnel.

Most of the Commonwealth personnel had been flown to the United Kingdom within two days of the Queen's death, and transported to Pirbright Army Training Centre in Surrey for the week leading up to the funeral. The 24 Defence Force personnel, with 64 Canadians and 28 Australians, marched a large circular route between the weathered barracks, becoming familiar with the cadence of 75 steps per minute.

In the early hours of 15 September, the contingent bussed to London for a night-time full dress rehearsal down the Mall, and the following day, the media assembled at Pirbright as the Prince and Princess of Wales arrived to meet the Commonwealth personnel. The pair chatted easily with the sailors, soldiers and aviators.

The word rippled among the media that the Defence Force personnel, who were last to meet their Royal Highnesses, were going to do the Defence Force haka, and the cameras shuffled to the left, pushing the boundaries of the media pen to try to get a better angle.

The Prince of Wales nodded at the haka's conclusion and the pair departed, and it was only later that Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro, in a speech at the New Zealand High Commission, passed on to the New Zealanders how impressed the Prince and Princess were with the honour.

On the morning of the 19th, the Commonwealth contingent positioned itself in the parade ground of Wellington Barracks. Everyone was in their number one dress, but the Commonwealth, compared to the absolute uniformity of the British regiments and services, presented a curiously mixed look. There was a variety of khakis and greens, berets, slouch hats and lemon squeezers, and the blue and black contrast of Air Force service dress and Navy winter uniforms and white caps.



There were four representatives from each of the four Army regiments, four representatives for Navy, and four for the Air Force: Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Laurelie Giles, Pilot Officer Arna Woods, Warrant Officer Digby Bentley and Corporal (CPL) Joseph Lavery.

The Commonwealth contingent was virtually leading the 1600-strong procession, and it was one of the first away from the Barracks. They marched up the Birdcage Walk and turned in front of the gravelled parade ground of Horse Guards, at the extreme end of St James's Park, and paused there. The procession could hear the service from Westminster Abbey over the loudspeakers. "God Save the King" was sung, a powerful moment for the paused troops.

With swords drawn, the contingent turned the corner and faced down the Mall, lined with guardsmen with bearskin-clad heads bowed, and tens of thousands pressed against the barriers along the route.

Further behind the Commonwealth contingent were the Defence Advisers in the United Kingdom, and back even further were the four Colonels Commandant, the ceremonial advisers to each of the NZ Army's four regiments with Royal links.

The procession circled around the Victoria Memorial, in front to Buckingham Palace, and proceeded the short distance to Wellington Arch, massing at attention on the grass to await the arrival of the Queen's casket, pulled on a gun carriage by Royal Navy sailors.

CPL Lavery said it was a significant moment.

The contingent marched back to the barracks and the public, released from the formality, showed their appreciation.

"That's what really hit me," says Lieutenant Colonel Dean Gerling, Contingent Commander. "The crowd there started clapping and saying thank you. It really tugged at the heart strings and you knew this was worth it."

**"That was it. It was the Commonwealth and all the Brits saying goodbye to Her Majesty for the last time. I felt very privileged to have been there for that moment."**

**- Corporal Joseph Lavery**

## Warrant Officer marches for the Queen



**Logistics and supply specialist Warrant Officer Darren "Digby" Bentley experienced a sombre moment of history marching down London's Mall in the Queen's funeral procession.**

**H**e was one of 24-strong New Zealand Defence Force contingent marching at Her Majesty's funeral in London.

Watching the Queen's coffin being taken from the gun carriage to the Royal hearse and driven away was a "goosebump" moment for Warrant Officer (W/O) Bentley.

"You knew it was the final thing and the last time I would ever see her."

A highlight of the week was the Prince and Princess of Wales' visit to Pirbright a few days before the funeral, to thank the Commonwealth contingents for coming this far. The New Zealand contingent returned the thanks by performing the Defence Force haka.

W/O Bentley is currently posted to RNZAF Base Auckland as the Command Warrant Officer. He joined the Air Force in 1990 after leaving Marlborough Boys' College. His father came home with a brochure and he thought the idea of airplanes and helicopters sounded pretty cool. "Thirty-two years later, here I am."

As a logistics and supply specialist, he has been utilised widely, notably in East Timor and the New Zealand Defence Force's support to the Antarctic programme. He was on the first Boeing 757 flight to land on the ice near McMurdo Base and has been an instructor for years.

"My parents were well-known school teachers and my sister teaches at Marlborough Girls' College. So I haven't quite discarded the family gene."

But he has never been to England before, despite having strong heritage with grandparents on both sides coming from Scotland and England.

As a Warrant Officer, getting back into marching drill was definitely a case of blowing off the cobwebs.

"It's been good to get a refresh from the younger ones," he says. "It's been great watching them and seeing how they are experiencing this."

"And meeting people from other countries, and networking with them, is how you make international relationships."

**"I've been very proud to be part of something that is much bigger than me. This is part of history, walking down there. It's something I can tell the grandchildren."**

## Returning to London



**The last time Leading Aircraftman Laurelie Giles was in London, she was celebrating the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. In September she returned to honour Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by marching in the funeral procession in London.**

**T**he 22-year-old was one of 24 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) sailors, soldiers and aviators alongside Australian and Canadian personnel in the Commonwealth contingent, close to the front of the procession marching from Westminster Abbey to Wellington Arch on the day of the funeral.

The contingent travelled from Pirbright Army Camp in Surrey early that morning to Wellington Barracks, near St James’s Park, for the procession.

“Once we got on the Mall, there was a sea of flags lining the street, the Golden Angel at the end (the Queen Victoria memorial)... we were tired, but when we got on the Mall you got a second burst of energy. You could feel this empathy coming from the crowd. They knew why we were there, to support the Queen, and what she has done in her lifetime,” Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Giles said.

The NZDF contingent arrived in the United Kingdom the previous week and had spent the week rehearsing at Pirbright.

LAC Giles joined the Air Force in 2019 after finishing at Longburn Adventist College in Palmerston North. She is a fuel technician at Base Ōhakea.

She joined the Air Force because of a love of aircraft. “I just wanted to be around them, and working with them, and Air Force was all of that for me.”

She had put her name forward to be part of the contingent for Operation Platinum, the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. When she returned to New Zealand she was told she had stood out and her name was suggested for the future contingent for Operation London Bridge, the response to the death of the Queen.

“The week before we left, I got a call and was told, you need to get yourself to Wellington.”

She said this was far bigger than the Platinum Jubilee event.

“Last time, the closest I got to the Queen was when she came out on her balcony. This is certainly more sombre. We’re here to honour the Queen, the only monarch we’ve known in our lifetimes. When I told my family I was going, they were amazed.”

**“When we started marching, you could hear the choir from Westminster Abbey. We were not sure what to expect and it’s at the moment you think: I’m really doing this for the Queen.”**

The contingent was bussed during the night to Wellington Barracks, near St James’s Park, for the procession in the morning. There were a few nerves, she said.

“But when you get out there, it comes together.”



## Brothers in arms on exercise

**B** | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER  
**Y** | SQUADRON LEADER KIRI OHLSON

**Brothers Robbie and Jeremy Smith were recently given the opportunity to experience what it was like to work on a major international exercise in Australia. Exercise Pitch Black did not disappoint.**

**LEFT TO RIGHT**  
Jeremy Smith, Robbie Smith

**T**he elder of the two brothers, Corporal (CPL) Jeremy Smith, is an aircraft refueller.

“Our oldest brother, Hayden, is in the Air Force too. We were all born about three years apart and joined the Air Force about three years between each other,” he said.

“I wasn’t interested in going to university and I could see that my brother was travelling all around New Zealand and then by the time I joined, in 2014, he was starting to travel overseas. So what appealed to me about being in the Air Force was earning money straight away and a job that allowed me to travel.”

The equipment at Base Tindal, in Australia’s Northern Territory, was very similar to what CPL Smith was used to using and was easy to understand, he said.

“We’ve got some ideas that we’ll take away with us for how to improve how we do things and be more efficient. It’s definitely cool to know that it would be reasonable for us to come over and within a couple of days be operating their equipment and working alongside them that easily, it’s fairly simple and cool to know at any point we could just come over and help them out and vice versa.

“Exploring this part of Australia that you wouldn’t normally come to has been a highlight for me. In the Northern Territory there’s been some pretty cool outdoorsy spots to explore and we’ve done some nice little walks.

“In terms of work we’re fuelling a massive variety of aircraft, some of it we’ve never done before so we are learning as we go, which makes it a little bit more exciting,” he said.

Younger brother Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Robbie Smith is a fire fighter.

“I joined in 2018 so I haven’t had many chances to travel overseas yet, so being here at Pitch Black has been great. It’s good to come over to exercises like this so we can relay back to command the idea of doing exchanges, especially when we can fit in so easily and so quickly.

“I’ve enjoyed the opportunity to meet a whole lot of new people and understand how Australians do things. The other two fire fighters that came over I’m already good mates with, so I was quite fortunate that I knew them well prior to coming here, and we already work well together,” he said.

**“Learning new aircraft like the F-35, we were able to have a bit of a familiarisation. Seeing something like that up close was pretty intriguing.”**

**- Leading Aircraftman Robbie Smith**

# Driving milestone achieved on exercise

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR  
Y | KIRSTY LAWRENCE



**After working as a caregiver for seven years, Aircraftman (AC) Jodie Dunwell decided she wanted a change.**

**H**er then partner, now husband, suggested she check out where a career in the New Zealand Defence Force might take her, as he was already part of the Air Force.

Now, not even a year later, she has been travelling around New Zealand providing support in different locations, and had fun while doing it.

AC Dunwell was one of the aviation fuel specialists working at Exercise Wise Owl.

While away, AC Dunwell, who lives in Manawatū, achieved her own milestone, clocking up 60 hours for her Class 2 Driver's Licence, making her a fully qualified Class 2 Driver.

The icing on the cake was when she drove the truck through to clock in her 60th hour, the fire crew on exercise did a water salute for her, with a peer from her recruit course in the fire truck.

"That was really cool," she said.

AC Dunwell became an aviation fuel specialist by chance, with a friend of a friend having the job when she was starting to look into what else might be out there for her.

She was able to go on a ride along with her and see if she liked it, and the rest is history.

AC Dunwell loved being up close and personal with the aircraft, gaining a variety of licences and also "chopper chasing".

This is when a helicopter, or multiple helicopters, are deployed for a last minute task, and the fuel tankers have to follow them via road to be able to support from where they are.

While in the role AC Dunwell said she could gain her licences from Class 2 to 5, her dangerous goods, forklift licence and one day could become a driving instructor.

There are not a lot of women in her trade, less than 15 per cent, and AC Dunwell encouraged more to think about joining.

For anyone thinking of joining the New Zealand Defence Force, she has three words for them: "Just do it."



**"I like the team environment. You come to work and you do your job, but it's the team you work with at the end of the day."**



## Taking flight in new skies

**B** | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR  
**Y** | KIRSTY LAWRENCE

**Nelson residents looking to the sky might have seen a group of unfamiliar aircraft operating recently as trainee pilots explored the area as part of Exercise Wise Owl.**

**D**uring the course nine pilots under training learn and consolidate formation flying techniques in a T-6C Texan.

Pilot Officer (PLTOFF) Nathan Sycamore said it was good to head to Nelson to practise their skills in a different environment, operating out of Nelson Airport.

Following in his father's footsteps, PLTOFF Sycamore joined the pilot course at Base Ōhakea in October 2021. Seeing his father's career created a desire for him to fly too.

"I had exposure to flying from a very young age, so that's what I knew I wanted to do."

However, when he went to join after high school he was told to go and get a bit of life experience first.

So he went and got an engineering degree under his belt, then from there reapplied to join after university.

PLTOFF Sycamore graduated from the 17-week RNZAF Officer Commissioning Course at Base Woodbourne last year, before heading into pilot training.

"It's good, it's challenging, it's definitely one of the hardest things I have ever done so far, but it's a really rewarding course.

"You're constantly growing and learning throughout the course."

Being almost a year through his course, the 26-year-old said it was awesome to reflect back to how they were at the start, and how far they had come.

Prior to this formation flying exercise PLTOFF Sycamore said they had worked quite closely with their instructor, but the exercise saw them also working closely with their course mates as well.

"You have to adapt to your wing man and understand things they might do, which are slightly different, so you can accommodate them."

He said the exercise provided a great opportunity to fly outside Ōhakea.

"It's great to show what we do, to everyone.

"We are in a really awesome part of Nelson and it's awesome to see the public excited about what we are doing."

# Vietnam memories

BY EDITOR  
REBECCA QUILLIAM

The Vietnam War lasted from 1955 until 1975, with roughly 3,200 New Zealanders entering the conflict in 1962 and staying until the end. Some 60 years later a number of those who fought on the land or in the air gathered in Masterton for a reunion.

#### LEFT

Ted Creelman sitting in a helicopter gunship.

#### MIDDLE

Ted Creelman speaking with fellow Air Force pilot Trevor Butler with a helicopter gunship.

#### RIGHT

Bill Flanagan.

Photos provided



**A**ir Force pilot Ted Creelman was looking forward to catching up with his old colleagues and reliving some of the stories from the posting.

“We’re not getting any younger – it was 50 or so years ago. There were 16 helicopter pilots and we’ve lost five of them so far.”

Iroquois pilots served with No. 9 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force, based at Vung Tau in Phuoc Tuy province. NZ Army pilots served in a variety of places in Army Aviation Corps aircraft types and roles, from 1968 based at Nui Dat, also in Phuoc Tuy province. And fighter aircraft pilots with strike role experience served with the United States Air Force in disparate locations as Forward Air Controllers.

Mr Creelman flew Iroquois and gunship helicopters during his deployment in 1968.

“In those days, we flew two pilots per helicopter and we had two crewmen gunners in the back and we could carry up to eight fully equipped troops at a time,” he said.

Tasks included moving troops into operational areas and supporting them as they cleared the areas of Viet Cong carrying howitzer guns in underslung loads also into operational areas and working with the SAS, “which got quite exciting at times”.

The Iroquois pilots would fly the New Zealand and Australian SAS troops (usually five-man patrols) and insert them near villages and trails where they watched and gathered intelligence of VC in the area for up to 10 days, making sure they stayed out of the area. Occasionally the troops would become compromised and would need to leave the area in a hurry. Those missions were “quite hairy”, Mr Creelman said.

“They’re racing towards the helicopter and you’re waiting for them to jump on board. We’d go along with a couple of gunships in support, but the helicopter would make a hell of a lot of noise, pointing anyone in the area to where we were. The Viet Cong weren’t that far away so you made a pretty big target.”

It was equal measures exciting and terrifying, he added. “It certainly got the heart rate up.”



Sometimes the crews were tasked with night-time propaganda missions.

“We went out with a bank of speakers in the Viet Cong suspected areas blasting out propaganda in the darkness with no lights on.”

Mr Creelman was also involved in sorties rescuing wounded troops and recalled one trip where two soldiers needed winching into the helicopter after dark.

“I flew over in the dark and spoke to somebody on the ground. There was one person in the middle of a small clearing shining a torch up and that’s them. We got the first stretcher up and the second one was about halfway up when all hell broke loose. But the Viet Cong was just firing at the noise. They couldn’t see us but tracer was whistling over the top – it certainly gets your adrenaline going.”

Bill Flanagan was in the NZ Army’s Armoured Corps when he decided he wanted to be an Army pilot and eventually ended up flying Sioux helicopters.

His tour at Nui Dat lasted 53 weeks and four days, flying Iroquois helicopters and working with the Task Force Intelligence Corps.

“The main aim was to go out and find the enemy, flying low-level in the treetops, looking for camps and trails.”

The environment was hot and humid, which slowed down the performance of the helicopters, Mr Flanagan said.

“Before Vietnam I had never flown over 50 hours a month. Over there it was quite normal to fly anywhere between 100 and 120 hours a month. I’ve never experienced that sort of sustained level of flying before.”

After three months, the Kiwi was promoted to Captain and ran the helicopters from the base for nine months.

His main memories of the deployment centred on the comradeship of his colleagues.

“Everyone was focussed, right across the board to the ground crew, who would work night and day. Quite often I’d be woken up at 2am to test fly a helicopter that had an engine transmission change. They were really dedicated.”

Returning home after such a long time, Mr Flanagan discovered the toll the war had taken emotionally.

“I walked out the door one day and came back 53 weeks later. My wife Ruth held the home front while I was gone. I had two little boys who had grown, I hadn’t driven a car for a year and I found it very hard to mix at gatherings – I’d be standing by the exit door. It was very hard to be social and return to normal I guess.”

About six months after his return, Mr Flanagan was presented with a telegram from the Queen announcing he had earned the Distinguished Flying Cross.

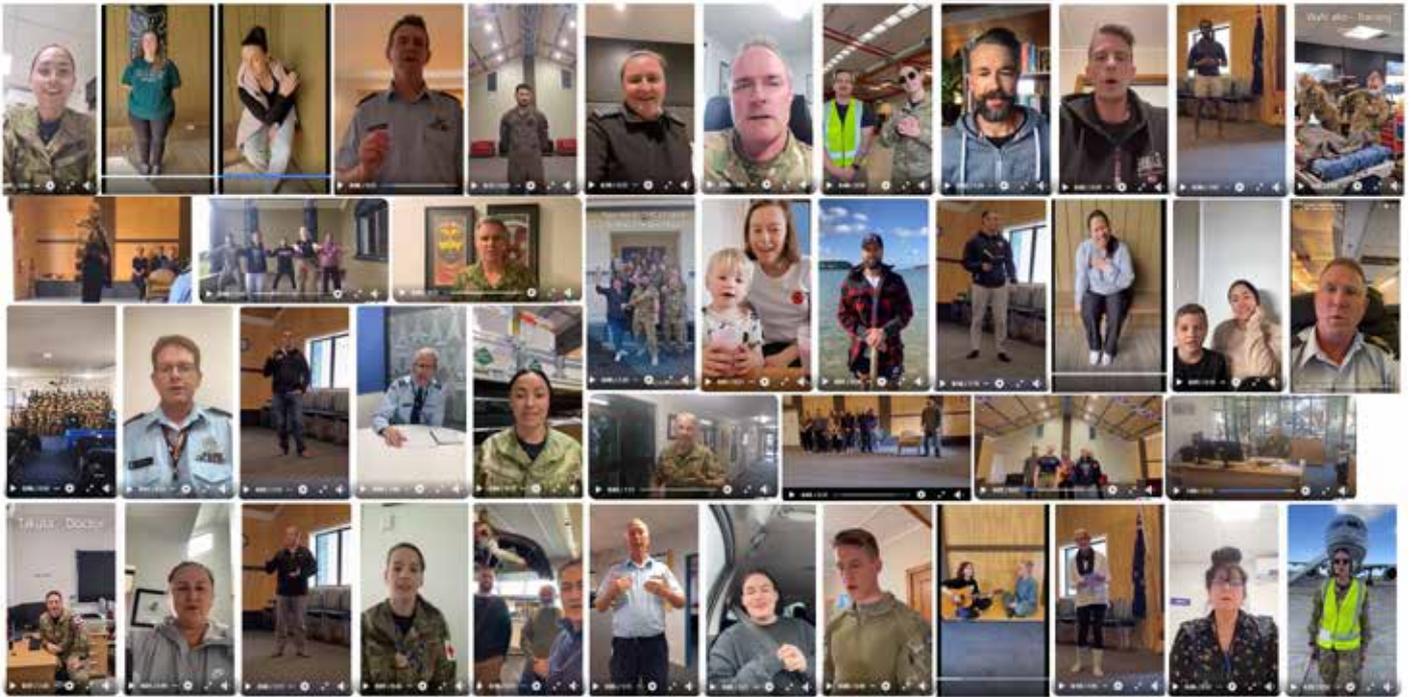
“It was for two actions. The first happened at the camp where a lot of Viet Cong attacked, which that lasted for quite some time during the day. The second was one of our fixed-wing planes was shot down one night during a huge battle and I was sent to find the wreck and the fate of our two pilots.”

Mr Flanagan was looking forward to the reunion and reliving some of his Vietnam memories.

“The stories will be told and there’ll be an awful lot of bullshit,” he laughed.

# Māori Language Week and the Tūrangawaewae challenge

**B** | TŪRANGAWAEWAE MANAGER  
**Y** | WAL WALLACE



## Tēnā tātou katoa. Greetings to all.

By the time this goes to print, Te Wiki o te Reo Māori (Māori Language Week) will be long gone but certainly not forgotten. To celebrate the week your Tūrangawaewae hosted an Air Force-wide challenge where personnel and units were invited to upload video clips to the RNZAF Tūrangawaewae Facebook page of themselves demonstrating te reo.

There were six challenges to choose from: saying your pepeha; performing the RNZAF Haka; singing a waiata; reciting a karakia; saying the longest place name in NZ; and reciting the Anzac Ode in te reo.

No entry was too small to be great. No speaker was too inexperienced to be significant. Every entry was carried out with passion and received with pride. All who had the courage to step out of their comfort zone gave so much more than a mere recitation – they gave te reo life, they gave it respect, they gave it value.

The challenges were met in some imaginative ways resulting in almost 50 video clips being uploaded. The clips came from across our Air Force spectrum – from Air Vice-Marshal to Aircraftman, from Commanding Officer to civilian, from whole units to individuals, from mums and their kids to half a recruit course.

What made this more impressive is that a large percentage came into it with very little to no reo at all. It was also great to see some of our senior command leading by example too. Well done to all that took up the challenge, and on behalf of Māoridom within the Air Force, I thank you.

Deciding upon a winner was no easy task as there were a lot of great entries. However, one unit went all out and most of the unit (if not all) played a role in their clip. As if that wasn't enough, they very imaginatively incorporated several of the challenges into their entry.

I am speaking of course, of Defence Health Centre (DHC medical) at Ōhakea. In their clip they walk you through the unit and teach you the Māori name of just about every room at DHC and what everyone does there! Yet they still found space to deliver mihi, pepeha, a karakia and recite the Anzac Ode too!

But don't take my word for it, check out all the entries on the RNZAF Tūrangawaewae Facebook page. It's a closed group so you will need to join the page to see its contents. Believe me, you will not be disappointed.

Ko te reo te kai a te Rangatira.

Ko tōku reo tōku ohooho, ko tōku reo tōku māpihi maurea.

*Language is the food of chiefs.*

*My language is my awakening, my language is the window to my soul.*



## Military Justice Online

### The New Zealand Defence Force has now published its Annual Report on the Military Justice System on its website.

The move is in line with the Defence Force's policy around transparency and informing the public of its processes.

New Zealand's military justice system is a separate and parallel system of justice that forms an integral part of the New Zealand legal system. It also shares many of the same underlying principles as the civilian criminal justice system.

The report details data collected on judicial cases over the 2021/22 financial year. During that period a total of 426 Summary Trials (dealing with 590 offences) were heard. There were five appeals to the Summary Appeal Court.

Four trials were heard in the Court Martial of New Zealand and there were two appeals to the Court Martial Appeals Court.

Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal (AM) Kevin Short welcomed the move to make the information public.

"Publishing the report is integral in ensuring our systems and processes are transparent to the public.

"We hold our people to a high standard and publishing the report on the NZDF website shows we are effective in holding the actions of our people to account, should they behave in a manner contradictory to military rules and regulations," AM Short said.

Alongside public transparency, making the report public will also have a deterrent effect on personnel, making it clear that certain actions have defined consequences, he said.

The military justice system currently has a two-tiered structure comprised of a summary system and the Court Martial of New Zealand.

Information about Summary Trials and Court Martials, along with appeal decisions are included in the report. Summary Trial information is categorised by service, rank and gender. The types of offences tried are also listed.

Punishments imposed by Summary Trial and Court Martial are also detailed in the report.

The military justice system is designed to promote the operational effectiveness of the New Zealand Armed Forces by contributing to the maintenance of discipline, efficiency, and morale, while ensuring that justice is administered fairly and with respect to the rule of law. These objectives give rise to many of the substantive and procedural differences that distinguish the military justice system from the civilian justice system.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The report can be found at [nzdf.mil.nz/military-justice-report](https://nzdf.mil.nz/military-justice-report)



## The 'Hush Hush Boys': An untold New Zealand story of the defence of Singapore

B | AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND  
Y | SIMON MOODY

**About 600 New Zealand Air Force personnel served in the defence of Singapore in 1941–1942. Some of their stories, such as the exploits of No. 488 Squadron RNZAF and No. 1 Aerodrome Construction Squadron have been well documented. There are, however, other stories still to be told. This is one about a small group who had extraordinary experiences.**

**A**s the Japanese threat to British colonial power in Asia grew during 1940, it became clear that strengthening the Royal Air Force (RAF) presence in that region required more than just additional squadrons and pilots. Far East Command was still operating on a peacetime establishment and there was a critical lack of non-flying personnel to deal with the preparations for war. In particular, there was a shortage of officers to provide administrative and specialist support on the ground, as well as to set up and operate modern systems and technology, such as fighter control and radar.

An advertisement appeared in a New Zealand newspaper in 1940, encouraging professional men to apply for short service commissions in the RAF Volunteer Reserve to fill these vacancies. Donald (Don) Duff, a Dunedin civil servant applied and was one of the 28 men selected. The ages of those in the group ranged from 24 to 49. Some had already seen service in World War I and came from a variety of civilian occupations including lawyers, civil servants and administrators.

The group had little idea what was in store for them, other than that they would be serving in the Far East. George Louisson recalled, "A memo was received ordering us to proceed to Wellington ready for embarkation. As the whole show was "hush-hush", we were to proceed as civilians and kit was to be procured in the Far East upon arrival."

The "Hush Hush Boys" embarked on a Dutch passenger ship on 2 July 1941, arriving in Singapore on 4 August. Here the 28 Kiwi RAF officer recruits settled into their billet near the civilian aerodrome at Kallang, were issued their uniforms and began their training. Duff and Louisson were initially posted to RAF Seletar, where they trained to work on radar installations, known as Air Ministry Experimental Stations.

By December 1941, tensions in the Far East were rising. Despite this, it still came as a shock when Japanese bombers attacked Singapore at 4.15am on 8 December. Japanese troops landed in the north of Malaya and began a rapid advance that would bring them to the Johore Strait separating Malaya from Singapore in less than two months.



In the meantime, members of the group were posted to active units. At his radar unit at Kota Tingii, north-east of Singapore, Don Duff got the unit up and running and able to lend some assistance to the defence of the island. It was an uneven struggle, though, and occasionally the “Hush Hush Boys” were in the thick of it. With the British, Indian and Australian forces in disarray and retreating fast, Duff volunteered to retrieve top-secret radar equipment from a station at Mersing. Mersing was effectively in “no-man’s land” by this stage and the operation took considerable nerve. Despite their efforts, all the equipment was later lost on a ship bound for Java.

As the Japanese closed in on Singapore in February 1942, members of the group found themselves in the same predicament as the rest of the British forces: how to escape the inevitable fall of the island. Duff and Louisson eventually escaped on a packed ship, SS Darvel, together with most of the radar personnel and some of the RNZAF’s No. 1 Aerodrome Construction Squadron, bound for Batavia (modern Jakarta, Indonesia). Not long out, Japanese aircraft attacked, resulting in multiple casualties.

The Darvel made it to Batavia, but many of the “Hush Hush Boys” were captured by the Japanese when the Dutch East Indies fell, including Don Duff and George Louisson. These prisoners spent the rest of the war in appalling conditions, suffering from malnutrition, disease and deliberate beatings and cruelty in camps in Sumatra. Their resilience was extraordinary. As camp adjutant, Duff did much to ease the suffering of fellow prisoners by organising their meagre resources to aid their survival. When they returned home the physical and psychological effects on the New Zealanders were often severe but, miraculously, none of the original 28 lost their lives during the war.

Those who escaped capture usually went on to serve in the RAF and RNZAF. As examples, John Kemnitz ended up on Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka) as an air traffic control officer. Carl Zimmermann had worked as an intelligence officer in Singapore and was retained by the RNZAF in New Zealand. His experiences were invaluable in setting up the developing RNZAF Intelligence Branch.



The story of the “Hush Hush Boys”, is just one of a number of New Zealand war experiences that deserve more attention. Thankfully, Don Duff and George Louisson both wrote memoirs of their experiences, and papers relating to several others are now in the Air Force Museum archives, helping preserve their remarkable story. While they did not fly or fight, their service in a campaign and aftermath that required patience, resilience and courage can only be admired today.

#### LEFT

Some of the 28 “Hush Hush Boys” aboard a ship on the way to Singapore, July 1941. Don Duff is third from left in the back row, George Louisson fifth from left.

#### MIDDLE

Don Duff (far right) with two other servicemen and Lady Brooke-Popham (wife of the Commander-in-Chief British Far East Command) on a muddy track at Kota Tinggi, Malaya.

#### RIGHT

Flying Officer Donald Duff in 1941.

# Operational Mission Assurance

B | WARRANT OFFICER  
Y | PHIL WANSBROUGH



**Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand is where the Defence Force's operational missions are planned, executed and managed by a dedicated team, from all three services.**

**I**n managing these missions from afar, how do we know that we've got it right? Planning, op orders, Command Directives – do we understand the changes or quirks of each mission and how do we find out?

Send a Mission Assurance Team. Seven missions, seven countries, three weeks.

The aim was to develop a comprehensive understanding of current and potential support challenges and opportunities the Defence Force faces in deployed missions.

The task was to encompass mission welfare, conditions of service, risk management, logistics support and auditing, health, communications and information systems, information management, security and key leadership engagement.

The team was led by J1/4 Colonel Emma Thomas and included the Inspector General (Joint) Commander Karen Ward, RNZN, J1 Wing Commander Becs Maynard, J1 Health Major Naomi Gough, the J4 Logistics team of Squadron Leader Tim Scott and Sergeant Logan Davies (NZ Army) and J63-3 Warrant Officer Phil Wansbrough (RNZAF).

The visit covered Op Monitor (South Korea), Op Troy (United Arab Emirates), Op Pukeko (Bahrain), Op Farad (Egypt), Op Gallant Phoenix (Jordan), Op Sudden (South Sudan), and NZDSU (SEA, Singapore).

The first stop was Seoul and Op Monitor where we quickly descended on to the NZ lines near United States Army Garrison (USAG) Camp Humphreys.



2



3



4



5

New Zealand provides the fourth largest contingent on the Korean Peninsula after North Korea, South Korea and the United States.

From there, the team moved to engage with the two Kiwis near the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) and North Korea, where the team got to understand the pros, cons and difficulties that go with the deployed roles.

Op Troy, and 50C heat, to Op Pukeko for some members of the team, and then on to Op Farad at South Camp, Sinai Peninsula. Again, the different conditions and tasks of this mission were immediately evident. After the formal welcomes at the Multinational Force and Observers Mission, and meet and greets with the NZ contingent, it was back into the core tasks by each specialist division.

In addition, the team received briefings from the Force Commander, Senior National Officer, MFO Chief of Support – another Kiwi – and the New Zealand Ambassador to Egypt.

A highlight here was the introduction to the concept of the Military Working Cat (MWC). Yes, cat not dog! The theory here is that the MWCs ensure there are no mice or rats around, and therefore no food for snakes. The cats are well looked after, with US Army vets ensuring they are cared for and vaccinated.

This won't be the last Mission Assurance Visit to our operational missions; the aim is for these to be conducted annually with missions such as Op Scoria or even Antarctica being considered. Could this be you? Talk to your career managers about posting to HQ JFNZ.

#### **ONE**

Team at the DMZ.

#### **TWO**

Team being briefed in Korea's DMZ transport Corridor West.

#### **THREE**

Kiwi Lines, Camp Bonifas, DMZ Korea.

#### **FOUR**

Key Leadership Engagement with Naval Support Facility (UK).

#### **FIVE**

Engagement with Op Monitor.

# NZDF hosts first women's International Defence Rugby Competition



**The New Zealand Defence Force recently welcomed to our shores military women's rugby teams from the Pacific and around the world to compete in the inaugural International Defence Rugby Competition.**

**D**efence teams from Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand Tonga, the United Kingdom and a combined Papua New Guinea/Vanuatu side represented their countries and militaries in the tournament in Auckland. They played at College Rifles Rugby Club, who have a long history with Defence and have produced many All Blacks and Black Ferns.

Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal (AM) Kevin Short was delighted for New Zealand to host the first Defence Women's rugby competition.

"The New Zealand Defence Force is proud to be hosting this inaugural event, bringing together Defence women from our military partners across the Pacific and around the world to engage through sport – bonding and battling for a winning outcome."

It also reflects the value the Defence Force places on supporting their people to follow their sporting passions, alongside their professional lives, he said.

The Defence Ferns, NZDF's mixed-service women's rugby team, features a number of players who have competed in the Farah Palmer Cup and in Super Rugby.

Defence Ferns co-captain Corporal Hayley Hutana played for the Blues and North Harbour and was excited to bring together her sporting passions with her work whānau.

"It was great to compete and network with other militaries and nations and also to promote both my job and my sport in one go," she said.

For other players, it was their first time participating in an international competition.

"Playing international rugby has been a dream of mine since forever," said Private Ebony Low.

Hosting the inaugural international Defence women's rugby competition meant a lot to the Defence Ferns and with the games being open to the public and live streamed, along with their community events, they hoped to inspire future Defence women through sport.



“It was great meeting other strong wahine from other Defence Forces but most of all, I loved being a part of growing the game for future generations,” said Lance Corporal Mary Kanace.

AM Short said local support boosted the Defence Ferns.

“It was great to see New Zealand get behind our Defence women, watch some exciting rugby, and celebrate these wahine toa as they went head-to-head, bringing us the best in Defence Women’s rugby, right here in Aotearoa New Zealand,” he said.

“I was proud to also share the stage with former Governor-General and NZ Rugby board member, Dame Patsy Reddy and Gender Equality Ambassador Louisa Wall in welcoming some 300 players, coaches, managers and support staff to our shores. It was also special to see Dame Julie Christie, Chair of Rugby World Cup NZ and Claire Beard, head of NZ Women’s Rugby from Rugby World Cup there to support this event.”

The standard of rugby and spirit of play was fantastic and with games open to the public, there was a lot of local support from the crowds. Our Defence Ferns had special visits from Sir Wayne (Buck) Shelford, patron of Navy Rugby and a number of Black Ferns. The Tongan team was honoured to have Crown Princess Sinai Takala, Prince Ara and Prince Tui Pele Hake, who were in Aotearoa New Zealand at the time, attend some of their games.

Having most games live-streamed meant fans could tune in live or watch the replays. Our International defence Rugby Competition management team also collaborated with Pasifika TV which picked up the livestream and broadcast this out to 24 broadcasters, across 13 nations in the Pacific.

For more information about NZDF’s inaugural women’s International Defence Rugby Competition, and to watch the replays visit [www.nzdf.mil.nz/idrc](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/idrc)

## RESULTS

Rugby legends Dr Farah Palmer and Sir Wayne (Buck) Shelford, along with Dame Julie Christie, Chair of Rugby World Cup – NZ and Claire Beard, Head of NZ Women’s Rugby presented teams with their medals and trophies.

Final results of the first women’s International Defence Rugby Competition

### **IDRC Champions:**

France – French Armed Forces

### **Silver Medal:**

New Zealand – New Zealand Defence Force

### **Bronze Medal:**

Fiji – Republic of Fiji Military Forces

### **Fourth Place:**

Australia – Australian Defence Force

### **Plate:**

United Kingdom – United Kingdom Armed Forces



## Inter-Service battle

**B** | AIRCRAFTMAN  
**Y** | NOAH GOSLING

**I recently participated in my first inter-Services rugby tournament. After such a long period with no inter-Base or inter-Services competitions or sporting tournaments it was great to be back out on the field. All of the players at the tournament were excited to have sport back, especially following the abrupt end to sport due to Covid.**

**B**eing back on the field put everyone in high spirits and the atmosphere was great for the week. The week started with a training camp over the weekend to prepare ourselves for the games. This allowed us to reconnect with our fellow aviators from Bases Ōhakea and Woodbourne who we hadn't seen in some time.

Our first game of the tournament was tightly a contested match against the Navy. Air led for most of the match, but a last minute try by the Navy resulted in a 12-all draw. This game saw Corporal (CPL) Brehan Lennie earn his cap for ongoing commitment to Air Force Rugby.

Two days later the lads backed up against the Army. This was also a tightly contested match, however Army capitalised on two minor Air mistakes, which resulted in an unrepresentative score line (31-16 to Army).

Captain, Sergeant Sam Cadman signed off his final game in the Air Force with player of the day and CPL Patrick Tafili-Reid earned his cap.

The week was definitely a good building block for the team, to rebuild and reconnect. It gave me a deep sense of pride to put on the Air Force jersey. I know the team has its eyes set on the King George Cup and we will strive for this next year.

I also gained a real appreciation for the amount of organisation it takes to pull together an inter-Services tournament and I'm thankful to everyone that made it happen, especially our sponsors, CAE, SG Fleet, Beca, Marops and Mitre 10 Mega Westgate & Henderson. Their continued support is greatly appreciated.

## Notices

### BRITISH NUCLEAR WEAPON TESTING 1957-1958

**The UK Government is issuing veterans who experienced health issues after nuclear weapons testing between 1952 and 1958 with a medal, pension and golden handshake.**

The testing, Operation Grapple, took place at Malden Island and Kiritimati (Christmas Island) as part of the British hydrogen bomb programme.

Our Government has accepted health issues affecting NZDF personnel by awarding the Operational Service Medal.

Gerry Wright (gerrywright@xtra.co.nz) would like crews who took part in flights during Operation Grapple at Christmas Island following the nuclear tests, to contact him so he can add their details to a Navy and Air Force newsletter on the subject.

### 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 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 NEXT SELECTION FOR THE

# 1 NZSAS REGT

FEBRUARY 2023

NOMINATIONS OPEN  
**21 OCTOBER**  
AND CLOSE  
**2 DECEMBER**

For more information or to download your application, please visit the NZSOF Intranet site:

<http://org/nzsof/LP/Recruiting.aspx>



**No. 41 Squadron  
RNZAF Reunion**  
(inc NO. 141 flight)

**Blenheim 31 March - 2 April, 2023**

For further information / registration contact the No. 41 Sqn Assoc at [des.glen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:des.glen@xtra.co.nz)





**B | CORPORAL**  
**Y | NAOMI JAMES**

This shot was taken during No. 3 Squadron's Exercise Blackbird. As I wasn't scheduled to fly with the crews that day, I positioned myself in a safe spot to get a more exciting nose-on perspective of the pre-flight checks. With the pilots in the cockpit and the helicopter loadmasters either side, all four crew members are captured with rotors running before take-off.



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A FORCE FOR NEW ZEALAND**