

AIR FORCE NEWS

Seasprite's mahi at
Raoul Island

Introducing
DARs

Haere rā
Orions

#255
MAR|23



**Eye of
the storm**

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Eye of the Storm



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OUR MISSION

The RNZAF will provide Aotearoa 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:
Eye of the storm

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NZAirForce



NZDefenceForce



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

First Word



B | SENIOR MEDIC
Y | CORPORAL TESSA BLACK

“It is a sobering reality when it’s hard to recognise an area that I know so well and the devastation that affected so many people.”

It’s hard to put into words what ran through my head when we were called to respond to my home, Hawke’s Bay. We knew that Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle had brought weather but we didn’t truly comprehend how much until we arrived.

When we first flew over, it was very quickly apparent the damage was going to be extensive. It is a sobering reality when it’s hard to recognise an area that I know so well and the devastation that affected so many people.

We swiftly set into the task, coordinating with Bay View Fire station and Police before flying in an NH90 for Eskdale, just north of Napier.

Throughout the day we rescued people from Eskdale, Whirinaki and then around Pakowhai/Fernhill area.

Over the afternoon we winched 10 people and 5 dogs; with two more NH90s stood up to respond, who rescued many more.

My primary role is as a medic, but I am also a winch person, which means that I can be utilised by the crew to ride the wire down.

Our initial Air Force response is a true credit to the teamwork between flying and ground support crews.

The significant and dynamic interagency response by the Defence Force, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, NZ Police, Hato Hone St John and Surf Lifesaving; to name only a few – truly demonstrates the cohesive relationships across the emergency services sector.

As different Defence Force assets move into the area, the response transitions into a second stage alongside an invigorated community who are committed to the relief effort.

Being able to help is a massive reason why I joined and why I love being a qualified helicopter medic with No. 3 Squadron. I’m proud to have had a hand alongside a great team in supporting the East Coast as they unite in this difficult time.

Eye of the storm

WORDS
REBECCA QUILLIAM

PHOTOS
SERGEANT VANESSA PARKER,
PETTY OFFICER CHRIS WEISSENBORN,
PILOT OFFICER CAL POST &
SERGEANT DAISY WILLIAMS

Over a span of 19 days the North Island was bombarded with two extreme weather events. The first, near the end of January, saw the top half of the North Island, especially Tāmaki Makaurau, swamped with heavy rain, causing widespread flooding and damage. Before the clean-up from that disaster could finish, Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle crashed into the island, wreaking havoc.

The fury of the storm resulted in roads destroyed, towns isolated, hundreds rescued from their flooded homes, power and phone lines lost for thousands of residents and tragically, 11 people lost their lives. The Defence Force was immediately deployed and were able to help local and national agencies with air, land and sea support.







A national state of emergency was declared as the cyclone unleashed hell across the motu. Immediately Defence Force personnel and assets were deployed to the worst hit regions along the east coast and top of the North Island.

Power and communications were lost to thousands of homes. Reports started pouring in of people being rescued from their rooftops and of whole communities buried under a deluge of flood waters and mud.

In the week following the worst of the cyclone's wrath thousands of people were rescued and vital supplies were trucked, flown and shipped in to devastated communities.

The Air Force supplied rotary and fixed-wing aircraft alongside ground, intelligence and communications support.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, NH90 helicopters responded to Hawke's Bay as part of a multi-agency response, led by the Rescue Coordination Centre of New Zealand. One of the tasks involved recovering people from the rooftops of their homes in Napier's Esk Valley. They also flew medical supplies around the region.

Another NH90 flew medical supplies to Whangārei Hospital, before conducting a reconnaissance flight over Dargaville to survey damage and transport of personnel and cargo.

By the next day the Defence Force increased its presence in its support for the response to Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle to 700 personnel and a variety of assets on the ground, in the air and at sea.

A C-130 Hercules conducted surveillance and reconnaissance along the East Coast and another moved communications staff (and a Pinzgauer truck) from Linton Camp to Tairāwhiti/Gisborne to establish communications and situational awareness.

Meanwhile three NH90s continued to evacuate people from their damaged Hawke's Bay properties as well as carrying out a reconnaissance flight from Napier to Wairoa to survey the areas and assess flood damage. A Seasprite helicopter conducted surveillance and reconnaissance in Coromandel.

A C-130 Hercules aircraft also conducted a surveillance flight across the East Coast area, including Wairoa. It was also tasked with taking blood and oxygen supplies to Hawke's Bay Hospital.

Further north in Northland, an NH90 supported Fire and Emergency New Zealand's response to Northland Emergency Coordination Centre. Tasks included airborne reconnaissance and photography, personnel transport and cargo movement, including vital cancer medication for patients in the region.

Over the two days after the cyclone's devastation, a C-130 Hercules moved Army personnel to Tairāwhiti/Gisborne, flew military reverse osmosis water treatment plants there and to Wairoa, and two Transpower 4x4 vehicles and crews from Christchurch to Kerikeri.





An NH90 helicopter moved Defence Force military satellite communications staff to Wairoa and a C-130 Hercules moved Army satellite communications staff to Tairāwhiti/Gisborne to establish communications and situational awareness for local emergency management staff.

The C-130 Hercules also flew 600kg of civilian communications equipment and 45 oxygen bottles to Gisborne Hospital.

By now our NH90 helicopters had evacuated hundreds of people in Hawke's Bay, from around the Puketapu area, as well as transporting other people from Tairāwhiti/Gisborne to Wairoa and Napier.

A C-130 Hercules flew 16 Army personnel, New Zealand Police, engineers, an Army communications vehicle and a reverse osmosis trailer to Tairāwhiti/Gisborne. The aircraft also flew urgent medical supplies from Auckland to flood-devastated areas on the east coast.

The essential supplies, which included medical oxygen and other gases, chemotherapy medication, pharmaceuticals, medical nutritional supplies and blood products, enabled hospitals to provide critical care and supported primary and community health providers.

Matt Carey, National Incident Coordinator for the Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand Response, said the need for the shipments was immediate and ongoing, because the normal transportation and supply chain for medical facilities and providers was severely constrained.

“These deliveries provided critical supplies to regions in need. They will continue until reliable road access is re-established. Maritime assets may also be used to support coastal areas.”

Mr Carey said Te Whatu Ora had been working through the National Crisis Management Centre to coordinate with the New Zealand Defence Force, as well as some private providers, to make the deliveries.



“This is enabling our hospitals in hard-hit areas to continue providing a high standard of health services despite the conditions. We are truly indebted to all of those who are helping.”

A week following the destruction, Defence Force personnel numbers had swelled to more than 950, supporting Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups with multiple activities.

Critical supplies continued to be delivered by NH90s, which flew fuel, water stores, water pump components and two electrical generators to Wairoa. Crews also flew supplies to remote communities in Hawke’s Bay high-country areas of Otamori, Patoka and Tutira and to an isolated community in West Auckland’s Waiatarua.

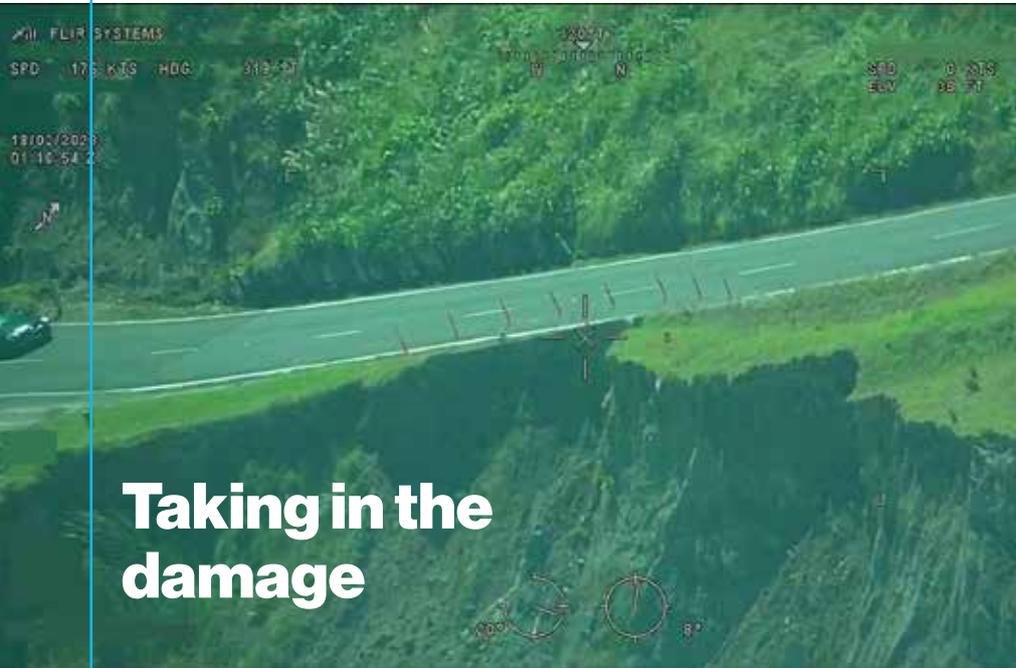
Crew in a C-130 Hercules delivered more than 220kg of pharmaceuticals, nappies and sanitary items, 40 water bladders, a generator and NZDF Starlink equipment to Napier and Tairāwhiti/Gisborne.

A King Air 350 aircraft and a Seasprite helicopter undertook valuable reconnaissance flights along the east coast and in Northland, charting slips and damage in the regions. No. 230 Squadron have also been hard at work analysing and processing the imagery for officials.

Underpinning all the efforts by aircrew was work put in by other deployed personnel including air movements operators, logistics specialists, refuellers and security force personnel who all played a role.

Air Component Commander Air Commodore Shaun Sexton said the Air Force effort had been “epic”.

“And it’s likely to continue for a while yet – particularly the provision of air lift and the ground-based support that enables it. The Air Force can be very proud of the mahi it has put in so far. The training we do to prepare for military operations is paying off now as the skills are applied to support many Kiwis in this difficult time.”



Taking in the damage

In the aftermath of the disaster, King Air aircraft and SH-2G(I) helicopters flew over the damaged landscapes and broken roads around the North Island. The imagery they captured was quickly sent to No. 230 Squadron for analysis and information was passed on to the other agencies that are supporting the emergency response.

PHOTOS
Taken by King Air aircrew



The dramatic photographs taken on flights gave valuable information to officials on the ground. Squadron Leader (SQNLDR) Craig Clark, from No. 42 Squadron, was on one of the King Air flights and said the sight of the turmoil left in the wake of the cyclone was shocking.

“On SH2 between Opotiki and Gisborne there were a lot of slips that had already been cleared and a lot of damage to the road that was being worked on. On an alternative back road to State Highway 35, between Gisborne and Wairoa, there were some big slips that had made the road impassable that hadn’t been cleared yet.

“I’ve also seen images from the other flights and it was amazing to see the scale of the damage, and how wide spread it was across the East Coast.”

This type of work was unprecedented for the King Air crews, which made the missions even more rewarding, SQNLDR Clark said.

“It required quite a lot of work and a combined effort from No. 42 Squadron, the Directorate of Operating Airworthiness, No. 230 Squadron and Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand. Everyone had to pitch in to get it across the line to make it safe and effective for us to go and do those missions.

“We had been expecting to do some maritime patrols and were preparing for that. To pivot to doing overland damage assessment was something that involved quite a lot of careful thought and planning.”

No. 6 Squadron’s Lieutenant Commander (LTCDR) Terry Rawhiti said two Seasprites were involved in the missions. The flights started after the Auckland floods in late January and continued following the cyclone.

“We also transferred supplies from Auckland to Shelly Beach and South Head,” he said.

“During the reconnaissance flights we



were looking for damage, flooded areas, people needing help and rubbish. After the floods there were quite a lot of slips and debris. As people started to recover from those there was a lot of dumping of household rubbish.

“After the cyclone we flew over the Coromandel and Thames area. Also the West Coast from Raglan up to Muriwai. The west Auckland area was pretty bad, a lot of main highways were covered in slips.”

Being able to be aircrew on the flights was fulfilling, LTCDR Rawhiti said.

“We can’t cover as big an area as the P-3K2, but we do reconnaissance flights quite often, but maybe not as often as we would like. It was good for our unit because most of our work is done on ships, but seeing us contribute to the efforts here is rewarding.”

A No. 230 Squadron intelligence officer said the team has worked long shifts, spanning 18 hours a day, analysing the imagery coming to them

from all the aircraft in order to quickly get the relevant information to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other relevant organisations, via Joint Forces New Zealand.

“Our priority has been to get the imagery that has come directly from the aircraft to the people who need to make decisions about where resources need to go.

“We have been working up initial damage assessments – so looking at towns or highways for slips and flooding and flood damage. We can then give that first big picture overview of where has the worst damage so that NEMA can decide where resources should go,” he said.

“It’s been an interesting challenge. The immediate turn-around has been the priority – it’s not about spending ages getting the perfect product out, it’s about getting the information out so the NEMA planners can use it quickly.”

The officer said the type of contribution to the disaster response from No. 230 Squadron Intelligence Flight was specialised.

“It’s been fulfilling to lean into that, using our skillsets to support fellow New Zealanders in a time of need. It has been confronting looking at the scale of the damage.”



As the emergency in Tāmaki Makaurau began to unfold on the afternoon of January 27, a team of Base Auckland firefighters joined forces with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) to help in badly affected flood zones.

Bringing a fire appliance, Unimog and four-wheel drive, they were tasked with ensuring residents were evacuated safely from their homes hit by rapidly rising waters.

After a debrief at the Incident Control Point set up at West Harbour’s fire station a team was called to a flooded basement in Hobsonville, Sergeant (SGT) Caine Spick-Walker said.

“We assessed it and there was flooding and we were able to divert the water away from the house. At that stage we didn’t have any capability, like sand bags, to be effective, but we did make some of the flooding subside, so that was a win.”

Then a more pressing call came in for them to get to Clover Drive where it was reported some people were trapped in their homes.

Arriving to the scene was a shock for the firefighters.

“The houses were submerged to nearly the tops of their doorways. There were about 600 square metres of houses underwater. Cars were floating, you could barely see the tops of front doors – it was pretty deep. I’ve never seen flooding like that before in Auckland,” SGT Spick-Walker said.

Aircraftman (AC) Joe Shields, working with FENZ at the Clover Drive flooding, was tasked with the rescue of a man who was paralysed from his neck down.

“He was in a house that was neck-deep in water. We found him in his lounge, on his bed, which was floating and being stabilised by a family member. It can’t have been a nice feeling for him, with his house underwater and unable to leave. We were able to put him on a stretcher and get him out of the house.



"It was good to get him out. There were a number of people who had already evacuated their homes watching from the edge of the water. The community moved items out of a garage where they could place the man. That was quite cool seeing the community helping in the situation."

AC Shields also helped an elderly woman from her flooded home.

"We waded through the water to her property. Once we were there we realised we couldn't get back the way we arrived because the situation had become too dangerous. But we were able to get her medication and some extra clothes and waited until there was a safe point to get through," he said.

"It still feels surreal, I've been a volunteer for FENZ for quite a long time now and not a lot fazes me, but that situation was so unique in terms of what we saw and how we dealt with it. A couple of hours later the water had almost all receded – it felt unreal."

During the Clover Drive rescue work, one of the residents lent the team a kayak to help the team move through the properties. Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Luke Vautier and fire appliance driver Craig Sanders jumped onto it and starting searching for people.

At one property LAC Vautier got off the kayak to walk through the chest-high water looking for a wheelchair user, reported to still be inside.

"I made my way through the house and was checking under couches and floating mattresses. I pushed a floating washing machine and the fridge out of the way – everything was floating in the house. I was checking everything I could – using my legs to check the floor because we had no idea what condition she was in."

Fortunately the resident had already made it out and LAC Vautier and Mr Sanders continued searching other properties.

"I've never been involved in a flood of that scale, with houses underwater. It was mind-blowing. I've always pushed to get involved in a major incident – we just want to help, it's why we signed up, it's why we do all the training," LAC Vautier said.

Mr Sanders said there was a fair amount of "confusion and chaos" in the quickly evolving situation.



“The other thing that was interesting was the difficulty in knowing what address we were at because all the letterboxes were underwater, so it was very hard to navigate to particular addresses. We also had to avoid cars, fences, bins and other features, which are not normally a hazard to most kayakers.

“We went to a number of properties speaking to people, making sure they were safe and in no immediate danger.”

Senior firefighters LAC Tristan Shepherd and Matt Fistonich, along with a FENZ deep-water rescue expert were sent to Rānui to check properties had been evacuated.

“In one house we found two people, one elderly gentleman and a younger gentleman and their two cats. The water level was up to the windows and was coming into their house, but we were able to get all four into the Unimog and safely away,” LAC Shepherd said.

“Outside the water had reached about 1.2m, which is about the limit for how deep the Unimog can operate in.”

Mr Fistonich said he hadn't seen a natural disaster like that in Auckland since December 6, 2012, when a tornado barrelled into Hobsonville, killing three people and injuring seven.

“The biggest take-away from me is the way the team acted and how everyone was keen to get in – we had everyone come in off duty and man the station. The station is a big family and it really showed that night I think.”

LAC Brayden Hart was manning the fire station at Base Auckland during the event and was called out to a nearby house in Whenuapai where a 93-year-old woman was trapped in flood water.

“We grabbed a ute and arrived at the address. We had to carry the elderly lady through the water and back to our vehicle. We brought her back to the fire station where she stayed for a few hours. The flooding was up to our mid-thigh, so there was no way she was going to be able to get through it.

“She was grateful to see us. Her daughter, who was with her, came back to the station as well.”

SGT Spick-Walker said he his team had done a great job that afternoon and evening.

The Air Force continued with support to the Auckland region over the rest of the weekend when the deluge continued. Crew on board a C-130 Hercules flew Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, and staff from the National Emergency Management Agency and FENZ to Auckland the following day.



The Prime Minister was also taken in a SH-2G(I) Seasprite helicopter to survey the damage from the air. A crew in a Unimog also delivered supplies to Warkworth.

In the week following the devastating weather the Defence Force had liaison officers in situ or on call at seven emergency control and civil defence centres to help coordinate requests for assistance if required.

Basic supplies such as towels, toilet paper, baby food, nappies and sanitiser were also provided by civil defence centres.

On February 1, crew on a Seasprite took Auckland Emergency management staff on a reconnaissance flight over areas of Auckland to assess flood damage and waste build-up. Air Force personnel provided analysis imagery from the flight to assist Auckland Council with waste management planning.

Personnel also helped residents in Waimoko who had asked for help with clearing flooded housing, moving gear and loading skip bins.

The following day 20 personnel from the Air Force and Royal New Zealand Navy went to several locations around Auckland to help communities with the removal of flood-damaged waste, such as household furnishings, for collection by commercial waste management contractors.

And a team of four Base Auckland personnel assisted with the pack-up and relocation of displaced people who had been staying at the Kelston Civil Defence Centre.

“I was pretty proud of the guys. It’s scary when you see them move into flood waters and out of sight. You have to rely on their training, experience and their colleagues in those situations.”

- Sergeant Caine Spick-Walker

Seasprite's mahi at Raoul Island

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR
Y | SIMONE MILLAR



The Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) has recently returned from the Kermadec Islands, supporting Government agencies in resupply, conservation and maintenance tasks to Rangitāhua/Raoul Island.

HMNZS Canterbury and a No. 6 Squadron SG-2G(I) Seasprite undertook Operation Havre, to assist in promoting safety and security in the region, ensuring environmental stewardship for Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Department of Conservation (DoC), Meteorological Service NZ (MetService) and Geological Nuclear Sciences (GNS) undertook works on the island during the 12-day operation, with the assistance of a number of contractors including the New Zealand Conservation Dog Programme. Northland iwi, Ngāti Kuri mana whenua, also participated in the operation, where they undertook research on the island's tracks and native wildlife.

Canterbury Flight, No. 6 Squadron tasks were to support DoC, GNS, MetService and Ngāti Kuri by moving people on and off the island, lifting cargo and personal gear from ship to shore, conducting aerial recon and moving people to locations on the island where tracks were difficult.

"This operation gives helicopter loadmasters under training the ability to do real-world winching, underslung loads and confined area landings. It also teaches the loadmaster to think on their feet and quickly re-role the aircraft to meet the requirements of the next task," says helicopter loadmaster Instructor Lieutenant Zach Taylor, RNZN.



Leading Helicopter Loadmaster (LHLM) Jesse Turi spent seven years as a Navy medic and the operation was his first time at sea as a helicopter loadmaster.

“The exciting thing about this operation is that I can put all my previous training as a loadmaster to use at sea. Every flight I did on this trip was for an operational output, from transporting civilians, winching people in and out of confined areas, to delivering equipment by vertical replenishment (underslung loads) between the ship and the island,” he says

The contribution Canterbury Flight made to Operation Havre was critical to the success of the operation.

“It made me feel excited and driven to be at the forefront of the Op Havre output. I’m returning to sea for the first time in my new trade, it’s clear to me that being a helicopter loadmaster is the best job in the Navy,” says LHLM Turi.

The RNZN operation was supported by a Landing Point Team, made up of personnel from New Zealand Army 5 Movements and Air Force Logistics.

A team of New Zealand Army plant operators from 2 Engineer Regiment carried out geographical surveys and soil and ground bearing testing, to assist DoC in the assessment of the island’s airstrip.

“Operation Havre is incredibly significant work for New Zealand, especially work on weather monitoring and early warning systems for tsunamis.”

- HMNZS Canterbury Commanding Officer Bronwyn Heslop

Defence Aviation Rules – Underpinning our Contemporary Aviation System

The new Defence Aviation Rules have now been introduced to the Air Force. Deputy Chief of Air Force Air Commodore Ian Mower and Wing Commander Hilton Baker tell us what the contemporary aviation system actually means.



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

This journey has now well and truly begun with the arrival of our first P-8A Poseidon late last year and with tangible progress being made on our new airworthiness system.

Both milestones represent excellent steps forward as we shift the dial on our Air Force and step into a modern era, typified by modern aircraft designed and supported by contemporary standards.

It's a challenging time but one that's been well thought through and ultimately underpinned by a framework that's widely recognised as "best in class".

The journey to the start line began in 2017, with our intention to align with the European Military Aviation Requirements (EMARs) and the adoption of our own Defence Aviation Rules (DARs) shortly thereafter.

Throughout the early stages of this transformation we, along with a number of our close military partners, took a cautious and staged approach that set the platform for where we find ourselves today.

The level of understanding, gained along the way, has enabled a "sense and adjust" approach to the change programme whereby we've been able to critically evaluate our underlying philosophies and review our organisational assumptions.

This staged approach has led us to better understand the foundations of the EMAR system, as well as our own organisational construct in order to deliver a more efficient, operationally-focussed system, the results of which we acknowledge this month.

However, a change programme of this scale and reach cannot be successfully implemented from within – external support has been a key feature of the programme.

Engagement with partners and international subject matter experts have aided the programme immensely by keeping us aligned and on track. We've benefited from the international experience of the team from Baines Simmons Ltd (BSL), renowned as experts in this area.

BSL has provided an excellent sounding board not only for what good looks like but also for expert advice and perspectives when we've needed to tailor an approach around some of our unique and at times demanding requirements. Without their input we would have struggled to meet deadlines and with reaching the quality and standard of framework we've achieved throughout this change process.

However, with any significant change initiative it's nearly always the calibre of people that will ultimately determine success or failure.



Without exception, the dedication and commitment of those involved with the introduction of DARs, over a number of years, has underpinned its success to date.

Their efforts cannot be understated in terms of deep intellectual thought when applying an Air Force context and also with the constant need to balance competing priorities.

Perhaps the most striking measure of these efforts has been that much of it has occurred over a period of major disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Their combined efforts will quite literally set the platform for military aviation for decades to come.

Finally, our Defence Aviation Rules system will successfully position us against international best practice and instil and support a continuous improvement mind-set that we know is inherent in all military aviators.

Our challenge is to now embrace this way of thinking, to take ownership of our future and be comfortable that we're on the right path to successfully navigate the "turbulence" typical in our business.

**B | WING COMMANDER
Y | HILTON BAKER**

This month we celebrate the achievement of a significant milestone on our journey towards the RNZAF of the future – the successful introduction of a contemporary aviation system underpinned by new Defence Aviation Rules.

These background changes, for operators and maintainers alike, represent an evolution rather than revolution in the way we do business by aligning us to international best practice and giving us a solid framework and tools to continuously improve. To be honest, it's not a sexy topic and the majority of you won't see anything different in how we do military aviation, but this is exactly how it should be!

So rather than bore you with talk that excites only the most socially inept of us, can I offer a couple of insights from the change programme that have RNZAF-wide application.

Now, more than ever, we have to "work smarter and not harder" which requires us all to think carefully about what our core role should be and how we best perform it. While rolling our sleeves up and getting stuck into a job is admirable, so too is time spent beforehand considering how it could be accomplished more efficiently.

Time spent "on" the business (improving processes, thinking ahead, etc.) can be as valuable as time spent "in" the business (doing the task) – the trick here is finding the right balance.

Tied into this for leaders is the awareness that bureaucracies such as ours have a way of generating work out of thin air and therefore being careful that we keep ourselves and our teams focused on those things that are truly important.

Despite the high standards that we in Defence hold ourselves to, there's a need to find where "good enough" sits. I'm not advocating any form of laziness, carelessness, or unsafe practice, but rather a recognition of when we're tending to "gold-plate" our work (seeking perfection) or overachieving.

This could be anything from the continual reworking of correspondence until all minor errors have been remedied, or consistently staying late at work to get "just one more" task done. Two adages apply here: 80% on time is better than 100% too late, and pulling your hand out of a bucket of water leaves no hole – overachieving can merely hide organisational deficiencies.

Our contemporary aviation system demands a change in thinking, like the areas above, in order to lead us in the direction of improved efficiency, maximised availability, and enhanced outputs. The change pain of the past few years is now starting to ease and the future looks brighter as a result. For those of you who were disappointed that this article didn't delve into the nuances of Defence Aviation Rules, give me a bell and we'll catch up for a coffee, stare at our shoes and talk some more!



In the zone

B | WING COMMANDER
Y | TIM WOOD

The Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) is a 245 x 4km area of land straddling the Korean Peninsula from the Han River Estuary in the west to the Gangwon-Do province and the city of Sokcho in the east. Tim Wood tells us of his time working as an education officer on Op Monitor.

It is a monument of razor wire, guard posts and minefields. But because it is also generally devoid of human disturbance it has become a nature reserve. Rare plants, animals and birds flourish in the DMZ.

Commonly seen are vampire deer, known as such because of their elongated teeth. Reported, but rarely seen, are Asian Black Bears, or Moon Bears. And legendary, but never seen in the DMZ, is the Siberian or Korean Tiger. The tiger used to roam the corridors between Korea and the People’s Republic of China but the loss of habitat has resulted in an inevitable decline.

Guarding the DMZ, on the southern side of the wire, are units from the Republic of Korea (ROK) Armed Forces. On the peninsula itself, the responsibility falls to various divisions of the ROK Army, many of which have glorious histories dating back to the Korean War and the Vietnam War, where several Korean units distinguished themselves with feats of bravery and fortitude.

The ROK Armed Forces also includes a modern and well equipped Air Force that recently fired missiles into the waters of the DPRK to reciprocate yet another missile firing from the North where missiles landed close to Ulleungdo Island and less than 60km from the city of Sokcho.

Guarding the waters of both coastlines is the ROK Navy, another well-equipped and determined body of men and women who regard defending their country as a patriotic duty.

All of the personnel, who operate in and around the DMZ need to be aware of the provisions and obligations of the Korean Armistice Agreement signed on 27 July 1953. Be they conscript or regular, officer or other rank, they need to understand and apply the Armistice obligations to de-escalate a situation where possible and to avoid hostilities. By doing so they continue to support the stability and prosperity of the ROK.

Enter the Armistice Education Officer (AEO), a role filled by members of the New Zealand Defence Force under the remit of Operation Monitor. A member of the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission – Secretariat (UNCMAC-S), the AEO is responsible for briefing the ROK units be they Navy, Marine, Army or Air Force, about the Armistice Agreement, and convincing the more sceptical that the Armistice Agreement is to be followed despite the training they might have received at unit level, and the rhetoric of the administration of the day regarding provocations from the DPRK.



As the AEO I travelled all along the DMZ to deliver training to ROK units and some US units in Panmunjom. Briefings were delivered to the Air Force Academy and the Army Third Academy with its enormous stage and screen; a real rock star moment. I travelled by Blackhawk to brief the Marines in the North West Islands, an area bristling with heavy weapons and multi-launch rocket systems.

A typical week would see the Education team head out on the road for a journey lasting between two and five hours. The key part of the road trip is, of course, the briefings to the troops. The Education team delivered two two-hour briefs each day. The introduction included a snapshot of Aotearoa New Zealand's involvement in the Korean War and our country's commitment to the Armistice Agreement.

The United Nations Command is explained before a summary of the obligations and responsibilities of those operating in the DMZ is provided. The most important section of the briefing is the discussion about Rules of Engagement and the application of the concept of hostile intent.

The conscripts are trained on unit

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), ie if X happens do Y then Z. The UNCMAC-S approach to hostile intent encourages a more analytical approach; to assess a number of factors before deciding if the enemy is demonstrating hostile intent, and if so, force can be used in response.

To assist understanding, a number of scenarios are used as training aids. These help the troops make the necessary connections and encourage discussion. There is no wrong answer. There are just some answers that are more helpful than others.

On occasions the audience will include Senior Non-Commissioned Officers or officers who were actually involved in the incident that is being taught. Their insights are invaluable and they appreciate that the scenarios are to aid training and not to be critical of any aspect of the ROK Armed Forces.

Koreans are an incredibly warm and welcoming people who genuinely appreciate the efforts of all New Zealanders who serve in their country.

“Training and engaging with members of the ROK Armed Forces is the purpose of the AEO role. It is also the highlight.”

- Wing Commander Tim Wood

The bonus of the AEO is the opportunity to travel through some exceptional countryside. The most breath-taking is the Haean Basin or the Punchbowl in Gangwon province. But anywhere along the DMZ provides spots to stop and look at this amazing country.

LEFT
Civilian DMZ Observatory

MIDDLE
DMZ fenceline

TOP RIGHT
Looking over the DMZ to the north

BOTTOM RIGHT
A briefing to ROK and US units



Final flight of the Orions

WORDS | REBECCA QUILLIAM & SIMONE MILLAR
PHOTOS | SERGEANT VANESSA PARKER & PETTY OFFICER CHRIS WEISSENBORN

Wheels down. After 57 years of faithful service, here and around the world, No. 5 Squadron's fleet of six P-3K2 Orions has come to a rest after final formation flights over the country. A powerful haka greeted the crews of the last two aircraft to touch down at Base Woodbourne and members of the squadron bid an emotional haere rā to the planes.





No. 5 Squadron's much-loved P-3K2 Orion aircraft put on shows around the country before the fleet retired at the end of January, after nearly 60 years of service.

A three-ship formation flight flew in the skies above the North Island and a week later a two-ship formation flight covered the South Island before landing for the final time at Base Woodbourne.

The first P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1966 and since then the fleet has carried out airborne surveillance and reconnaissance missions around the globe. Although Aotearoa New Zealand's areas of economic interest, Exclusive Economic Zone, the South Pacific and the Southern Ocean were its primary operating areas, the P-3 Orion operated over every continent through its life – covering missions from Antarctica to the Arctic, the Middle East, South East Asia and through Europe and North America.

The fleet of six Orions has provided a range of services to government agencies and communities, including fisheries and customs surveillance, search and rescue missions, and humanitarian aid and disaster relief; alongside security and stability operations in the Middle East and South East Asia working for United Nations (UN) and Combined Maritime Forces Commands.

"This is a bittersweet moment for us, where we have to farewell a faithful old friend who has looked after not just our crews for nearly 60 years, but all of New Zealand and our friends and neighbours in the Pacific," said No. 5 Squadron Commanding Officer, Wing Commander (WGCDR) Glen Donaldson.

In total, the six P-3 Orions have flown just under 150,000 hours of service. This has included such milestones as the search for flight MH-370 which disappeared in 2014 en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing; the Queen's Birthday 1994 search and rescue in which they assisted several vessels caught in a huge storm during the Auckland to Suva yacht race; becoming the first aircraft to provide reconnaissance after the Hunga Tonga Hunga-Ha'apai eruption, alongside countless missions after cyclones devastated Pacific islands; counter-narcotics, anti-piracy, and anti-smuggling security missions in the Middle East; and more recently security patrols for the UN in the East China Sea to counter smuggling activity to North Korea.

From hunting submarine periscopes in the North Sea on exercise with allied partners to finding people clinging to fishing buoys in the South Pacific, the P-3 Orion really has seen the world and made a huge contribution to individuals, to communities, to Aotearoa New Zealand and to global partners.

"That life-saving sound of a P-3 overhead, heard by many, will be gone. But for all those people who have had any sort of interaction with the aircraft, she'll always be in our hearts and memories," WGCDR Donaldson said.

Four P-8A Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft will replace the Orion fleet and will be based at Base Ohakea. The first of the new Poseidon aircraft landed in Aotearoa New Zealand in December.

"This is certainly a historic time to celebrate the long service of an amazing aircraft, but also an exciting time as we transition to a new era of maritime patrol which will continue to serve the people of New Zealand faithfully," WGCDR Donaldson said.

In total, over the past 57 years the fleet has flown 147,978.2 hours.

TOTAL HOURS FOR EACH AIRFRAME:

NZ4201	24,419.3
NZ4202	26,721.1
NZ4203	26,599.8
NZ4204	22,171.5
NZ4205	25,880.9
NZ4206	22,185.6



Farewell the mighty hunter

B | WING COMMANDER
Y | GLEN DONALDSON

After 57 years of dedicated service the P-3K2 Orion “The Mighty Hunter” has flown for the final time under the RNZAF banner.

The retirement of our much loved “office” is a bitter-sweet moment for all those that have worked in, on, or around them with plenty of stories being relived and shared at the recent No. 5 Squadron Family/Open Day.

It has been my honour to lead No. 5 Squadron through this particular milestone and quite a privilege to talk with people who have operated these machines through several different eras.

From the stories of “wooden submarines” the first crews joked with the Americans about during their initial training, to the stories of submarines in New Zealand waters in the 1970s, and on to the drug busts and “pirate” hunting in the Middle East in more recent times, the stories have all been colourful and relived with enthusiasm.

The other noticeable aspect of almost all of the stories is the role of the aircraft; it is like another person in the story, just part of the crew and I believe this is what makes these aircraft so special to us.

Even our newest members now have a P-3K2 story to tell given the final months of operation were littered with search and rescues, patrols and foreign engagement. Even the final operational flight was responsible for saving two lives and having a hand to play in a nationally significant drug bust!

The P-3K2 was operated to the highest level right to the end and it was awesome to see all of our members (no matter how new) form an attachment and develop much respect for these amazing machines.

Although this is the end of the P-3K2 Orion, it is just another chapter in the No. 5 Squadron story (which is quite the journey). As much as we love them, the legacy is not the aircraft but it is the people.

We tell the stories of amazing search and rescues in the Pacific, or chasing submarines in the Minch (North Sea), or that carrier group that was happened upon in the South China Sea; all these events have two common denominators, the P-3K2, but moreover the teamwork, the camaraderie, the shared experience that transcends the aircraft type and is the ongoing legacy that will continue with No. 5 Squadron through the P-8A era.

So as we farewell the mighty hunter with a tinge of sadness to see an old friend go, the legacy of No. 5 Squadron, the people, continue the story in the next chapter ensuring continued success and building on the strong foundations of our whakapapa.



Final search a success

On the final search and rescue mission of the Orions' nearly 60-year long career, aircrew found two missing fishermen who had been floating in the Pacific for six days.

In the search and rescue task, in January, the Orion crew found the two men in their dinghy shortly after arriving in the search area.

“Our Orion aircraft and the generations of people that have flown, maintained and supported them have certainly proved their worth over many years of service, conducting long-range maritime surveillance patrols in a range of theatres,” Base Commander Auckland Group Captain Mike Cannon said.

“To do this mission, finding two men on a tiny boat in a vast area of ocean, is certainly a fitting end to the Orion’s search and rescue duties and the crew is obviously thrilled with the result.”

The two men had been missing from Kiribati for six days, with several agencies involved in the search and rescue operation.

The Fiji Rescue Coordination Centre requested assistance after the two men were reported missing. Maritime New Zealand’s Rescue Coordination Centre (RCCNZ) provided drift modelling and search areas.

The US Coast Guard sent a C-130 aircraft to search the area but was unsuccessful before the Orion joined the search.

After finding the men, the Orion crew dropped a survival pack to them which included water, a radio, a torch and an activated personal locator beacon to pinpoint their location for crew on a rescue vessel.

Kiribati search and rescue vessel MV Lady Guadalupe was dispatched to the pair’s location to take the men to safety.

RCCNZ General Manager Justin Allan said the Orion had been at the heart of Aotearoa New Zealand’s ability to deliver lifesaving search and rescue services across our vast maritime area of responsibility.

“The aircraft and its crews over several decades have saved hundreds of lives, off the coast of New Zealand and throughout the Pacific.

“For many people missing at sea, the sight of the Orion coming towards them will be one they will never forget,” he said.

No. 5 Squadron has since handed over search and rescue responsibilities to No. 40 Squadron and its C-130 Hercules aircraft until the new Boeing P-8A Poseidons become operational.

Assembling the world's biggest flat pack

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR
Y | KIRSTY LAWRENCE



Installing a brand new simulator in the middle of a Covid-19 lockdown isn't the easiest task.

But when the Ministry of Defence realised they could get the NH90 simulator into New Zealand, just not the people to install it, they worked with what they had.

Ministry of Defence Acquisition Lead, NH90 Simulator and ORACS/Capability Delivery Andy Evans said they accepted the simulator in Montreal, Canada in February 2020.

Not long after that Covid-19 started to impact the world.

"A couple of weeks passed and we realised at that point we were not going to get any CAE staff to come into the country to install it, and the simulator itself was still stuck in Montreal," he said.

Finally, the simulator was booked on a ship to come to New Zealand, arriving in country weeks later in eight 40-foot containers, but the specialist installation personnel still could not get in.



Usually it would take a team of about 15 technicians and engineers to install the simulator, but with limited options, four CAE staff members based at Ohakea and three Royal New Zealand Air Force support personnel worked together to make it happen.

"None of the guys had ever installed a sim before, but they had virtual support from Montreal and it all worked out really, really well," Mr Evans said.

Some good old-fashioned Kiwi initiative also came into play, with one step of the process seeing eight large fibreglass "petals" all needing to come together, which used to be a tedious process.

The team came up with a plan that meant rather than doing it one piece at a time, they would put all eight in place at the same time and use a strop to slowly close it one ratchet at a time until it all popped into place. This technique is now an option for other CAE installations.

After the simulator was installed, the team completed testing on it to ensure it met the required criteria, before applying for approval from the Airworthiness Authority so the NZDF could use it to train pilots, even while it was in an unfinished and non-certified state. Approval was received in October 2020.

This was critical to No. 3 Squadron operational training, as pilots could not get overseas freely, so using the simulator was really the only option, Mr Evans said.

In February 2021 they managed to get CAE specialist staff into New Zealand to do final assessment and tuning on the equipment.

With continuing closures of the New Zealand border, it wasn't until May 2022 that it was officially qualified.

Mr Evans said a positive aspect to the simulator was that it was great for practising safety aspects of flying, like what to do if there is an engine fire, as you can practise how you would react in real time, pressing the buttons as you would if it was a real event.

"You can fly it all the way to the ground with no engine. That's what it was bought for, but also how we can use it for mission training, and that's what Exercise Steel Talon showed, they used it to train scenarios before they went to Waiouru," he said.

NZDF's "ambitious" carbon emissions reduction plan

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR
Y | DAVE WILLIAMS

The New Zealand Defence Force has unveiled its plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, by addressing fuel and energy efficiency, while investigating a battery of other long term change options, to help the Government meet its climate change obligations and sustainability goals.

As part of the Carbon Neutral Government Programme the NZDF aims to reduce gross emissions by 21 percent by 2024/25 and 42 percent by 2029/30, compared to the base year 2016/17. The NZDF has aligned the emissions reduction plan to these science-based targets.

The plan focusses on three major drivers of NZDF emissions: managing fuels; managing commercial travel; and managing Defence estate (energy, electricity, and waste).

It will be underpinned by three enabling lines of effort: data and information; governance and partnerships; and innovation and grassroots action.

Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal (AVM) Andrew Clark, Executive Sponsor for the NZDF Climate Change Response Programme, said the targets were ambitious.

"The NZDF is a military organisation required year-round for a wide range of Government-directed tasks. It cannot simply dial back its use of aircraft, ships and other vehicles, which account for about 60-70 percent of the NZDF's emissions."



NZDF emissions reductions have been tracking below the targets but largely as a result of short-term rather than enduring changes, such as Covid-imposed activity slowdowns and lower activity of ships due to decommissioning, replacement and upgrade projects. Newer equipment is expected to be more fuel-efficient and less emissions-intensive.

The NZDF faces problems similar to other energy-intensive operators, in that current alternative fuel technologies and their supply lines are still maturing for heavy vehicles, aircraft, and ships.



They are yet to be proven appropriate for use in military operations in austere conditions, or viable for existing NZDF platforms and equipment to convert to alternative fuel technologies. The support of industry and international military partners will be essential for success.

The plan sets a “direction of travel” for the NZDF regarding its efforts to reduce gross emissions, rather than a detailed set of actions, AVM Clark said.

Within these two broad areas, initiatives that are already underway include the NZDF Electric Vehicle Project, investigating the viability of sustainable

aviation fuel, aligning the NZDF’s commercial travel agent booking system with changes to NZDF travel policy to prioritise lower emissions options, and exploring opportunities for integrating renewable energy sources into Defence energy networks.

“Climate change is a global strategic challenge that faces everyone,” AVM Clark said.

“It will affect everyone in the NZDF, including the reasons for our operations and how we conduct them. Reducing our own emissions also involves everyone – there is plenty of scope for grass roots innovation, and we’re already seeing it.

“There are changes we can make now to create more efficient systems and to trial interim solutions, including sustainable fuels and energy.

“In the long term, replacing military equipment with greener technology, although a challenge, will be a priority for the NZDF. In the short term, the pace of change in the New Zealand economy and among military partners makes emissions reductions both a significant challenge and opportunity for the NZDF.”



Kiwi escaper's disguise preserved at the Museum

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

A recent donation to the Air Force Museum's collection tells a remarkable story of one Kiwi airman's escape from a prisoner of war camp.

TOP RIGHT

Gordon Woodroffe in RNZAF uniform, circa 1940

MIDDLE

Some of Gordon Woodroffe's items are now on display at the Museum, including the civilian beret and shoes he wore during his escape

BOTTOM RIGHT

Civilian clothing worn by Gordon Woodroffe during his escape from a German prisoner of war camp in 1944



Warrant Officer Gordon 'Woody' Woodroffe of Matamata was captured after his Wellington bomber ditched in the North Sea on 11-12 September 1941. He later became the only New Zealand airman to successfully escape from a German prisoner of war (PoW) camp during World War II.

While imprisoned in Stalag Luft III in July 1942, Gordon swapped identities with an Australian soldier. His new identity as an army private meant that he was eligible for a kommando (working party), which presented better escape opportunities than remaining in camp. He was transferred to Stalag VIII B and in May 1943, escaped from a kommando near the Germany-Czechoslovakia border. He succeeded in walking and cycling all the way to the Austrian alps before being recaptured.

Undeterred by this failure, on 17 August 1944 Gordon escaped from another kommando, with German money, forged documents and clothing, which he had acquired in exchange for cigarettes. Gordon had been given a pair of civilian shoes, but he also acquired beret, shirt, tie, coat, and trousers, to disguise himself as a free French foreign worker.

In his civilian disguise, Gordon travelled by train all the way through northeast Germany to the Baltic port of Wismar, his ability to speak German helping him along.

In Wismar he was assisted by a group of Frenchmen to board a Swedish coal vessel. The sailors agreed to hide him under the cabin floor, and when the Gestapo came to do their routine inspection, they diverted their attention by bartering with them.

When the ship docked in neutral Sweden, Gordon made his way to the nearest police station, and after receiving a new passport, was conducted to the British Consulate in Stockholm. He realised, with "an intense emotional surge" that he was free at last, and was flown back to Scotland on 8 September 1944.

Gordon's escape was an incredible accomplishment, given that only 33 others, from a total of 10,000 Royal Air Force PoWs, managed to achieve a "home run" back to Britain. He later received the Military Medal for his efforts.

The clothing that Gordon wore during his escape, along with other personal effects, were generously donated to the Air Force Museum by his family in 2020. Several items are now on display in the Museum's 'Horizon to Horizon' gallery.



Australian leadership opportunities

B | AVIATOR OF THE YEAR
Y | SERGEANT REBEKAH RICHARDSON

Three Defence Force personnel were recently given the opportunity to attend the Australian Defence Force Chief of Defence Force Leadership Forum, which was held in Canberra.

The tri-service event involved 130 Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) from all Australian Defence Force (ADF) units and services along with invited international personnel. From the Defence Force Leading Youth Development Specialist James Faleofa, Sailor of the Year; Corporal Jack Dowdle, Soldier of the Year (runner-up); and Sergeant Rebekah Richardson, Aviator of the Year, were given the opportunity to represent New Zealand alongside personnel from Singapore, Tonga, and Malaysia.

The purpose of the forum was to bring together a wide representation of ADF NCOs and provide them with direct access to senior leadership to discuss current issues from the ground up.

It covered an array of topics from leadership to culture and ethics. In our syndicates, we were given topics to present to the group, and through doing so quickly realised that the difficulties faced by the ADF are remarkably similar to those we in the Defence Force are struggling with – retention and recruitment being their biggest ones.



Personnel were also given the opportunity to directly pose questions to not only service chiefs and representatives, but also directly to the ADF's Chief of Defence Force. Previous forums proved to be successful and popular platforms for NCOs to voice their valuable opinions.

The biggest takeaway for us was having the opportunity to network with our Australian counterparts; often from our respective trades which we expect to work closely with in the future. Learning the importance that the ADF puts into training ethics at all rank levels was an eye opener and we noticed both similarities and differences in what's important to each military, what we teach and even how each service operates.

In addition to the Leadership Forum, we were fortunate to be hosted by the New Zealand High Commission for a day where we received an official welcome and met key players, such as the Defence Advisor team, the High Commissioner and our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade counterparts.

We learned how and what a High Commission does and how it serves New Zealand interests in Australia. Visiting the Australian War Memorial was a poignant moment and highly recommended for anyone visiting Canberra wishing to pay their respects to fallen comrades.

Overall, we were all incredibly grateful for this opportunity and look forward to further occasions where we can work closely with our Australian counterparts.

LEFT TO RIGHT

CPL Jack Dowdle, SGT Rebekah Richardson, LYDS James Faleofa

Going for gold in Taekwon-Do

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR
Y | CHARLENE WILLIAMSON



Aircraftman Bailey Jeffery has been selected to compete at the Taekwon-Do Federation World Championships in September in Finland.

The 21-year-old joined the Air Force as an aircraft technician in 2020. He is currently completing his training at Base Woodbourne.

A black belt in Taekwon-Do, Aircraftman (AC) Jeffery has been training for 12 years and has represented New Zealand on the international stage four times already.

“I represented New Zealand for the first time at a World Cup in 2016 when I was 15 years old.”

The hard-fought selection process involved a number of factors including previous experience at international and national level events as well as personal attitude at club training and in everyday life.

“There was an official trial weekend in Auckland where coaches saw everyone who was trialling for the team and then made the decision for the team for Worlds.

“I have been selected for both individual and team events for the competition,” he said.

Training requires a lot of dedication and AC Jeffery is grateful for the support from Air Force to make it happen.

“My training involves a variety of sparring, special techniques and patters training within Taekwon-Do, all events I will be competing in at Worlds.

“Outside of Taekwon-Do I do a lot of weightlifting, running, explosive plyometric (jump training) and cardio training.”

In preparation for the competition he is aiming to train between nine to 10 times per week. He will continue to train in Palmerston North every weekend in preparation for the championships.

“It is very humbling and a great privilege to be selected to represent New Zealand again at the top level for the first time in a few years since Covid.”

- Aircraftman Bailey Jeffery

“I want to do everything I can to make the most of the opportunity and best prepare myself so I can obtain the best possible results at competition time.”

AC Jeffery will represent New Zealand on September 4-10 in Tampere, Finland. He has also been nominated by the Woodbourne martial arts club for the Defence Force Sportsperson of the year award.

Notices



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With the establishment of the latest iteration of the New Zealand Defence Force website, we are reviewing how our Service publications are presented and distributed to the public. At present they are in hard copy form and viewable online at www.nzdf.mil.nz.

Following this edition, we will be stopping the delivery of hard copy service magazines to private subscribers at overseas addresses. This is due to cost of delivery and our desire to reduce the carbon footprint of our international deliveries.

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Our personnel, Defence Force organisations and partners, and Defence Advisers in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas will continue to receive hard copies.

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

As a past or present aviator of the Royal New Zealand Air Force there are a number of organisations designed to support you in a variety of ways.

These include financially, rehabilitation services, workplace support, support for you and your family in case of illness, injury or death, and keeping in touch with old colleagues.

Please look into these organisations for support you might need:



0800 483 8372 or +64 4 495 2070
www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz



www.missingwingmantrust.org.nz



**Royal New Zealand
Air Force Association Inc.**

rnzafanatsec@gmail.com
PO Box 164, Kirwee 7543



B | CORPORAL
Y | RACHEL PUGH

I missed the Texans flying low over the P-8A twice while it was being prepped for its first flight from New Zealand soil. At the risk of my photographer credentials being questioned for failing to capture such a cool moment, I lurked outside and prayed that the Black Falcons aerobatic team would come back one more time. Good thing I was feeling lucky!







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