

# NAVY T O D A Y

TE MANA  
MISSILE FIRINGS

AOTEAROA ON  
OP CRUCIBLE

MANAWANUI  
HAS THE DATA



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*“At every turn AOTEAROA’s sailors have had a smile on their face and put 100 percent effort into everything they have done. I certainly couldn’t ask for more.”*

– Commander Rob Welford, Commanding Officer HMNZS AOTEAROA



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**Navy Today** is the official magazine of the Royal New Zealand Navy. Established to inform, inspire and entertain serving and former members of the RNZN, their families, friends and the wider Navy Community.

**Published by:**  
Defence Public Affairs  
HQ NZ Defence Force  
Wellington, New Zealand

**Editor:**  
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**Design and Layout:**  
Defence Public Affairs

**Printed by:**  
Bluestar  
Private Bag 39996, Wellington

**Distribution:**  
Email: [navytoday@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:navytoday@nzdf.mil.nz)

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Copy deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the following issue. Subject to change.

Views expressed in *Navy Today* are not necessarily those of the RNZN or the NZDF.

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**Front Cover:**  
LWTR Joanna Mafi aboard HMNZS MANAWANUI

**Photographer:**  
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**To Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government



# Yours Aye

Chief of Navy



Wow, 2023 is almost over... and reflecting on the last 12 months, it has been a bit of a mixed year.

Very early on the nation suffered a number of weather events that caused serious damage around the motu. Many sailors were directly impacted by flooding in and around Northland, Auckland and the Coromandel, with homes and vehicles being damaged or lost. Many were called out to respond and assist others in the community in need, sometimes being recalled from leave to join working parties.

And then Ex Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle hammered the North Island, especially the East Coast, necessitating an immediate and large response from the New Zealand Defence Force, including Navy. Ships programmes were changed and sailors deployed at short notice to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. The flexibility and responsiveness of the Royal New Zealand Navy was demonstrated once again, with cut-off communities gaining confidence and hope through the support you provided. One thing that made me very proud to be in the Navy was seeing the many photos of sailors showing compassion as they supported others, and occasional photos of fun being had as the mahi was being done. We know that executing a mission that has a noble purpose is personally and professionally 'satisfying', and it is clear many of you felt purpose in your mission as you served the country.

As we approached the middle of the year a number of things happened, some good... some not so. High attrition continued to be a feature; however, a number of new initiatives were delivered in response. As well as the across the board 'one-off payment',

some strategically significant trades were offered retention payments, enhanced cashing up of leave was offered to all, and the Interim Maritime Sustainment allowance was introduced for those required to serve in ships overnight away from home. These initiatives were followed up by a notable pay adjustment for most sailors in July. Notwithstanding the austerity measures described by government, which the NZDF will obviously do its part to support, I note a number of other conditions of service, allowance and remuneration reviews and initiatives remain under active consideration. More information on these will be forthcoming in the New Year.

August saw the Minister of Defence, Andrew Little, Chief of Defence Force, Air Marshal Kevin Short, and Secretary of Defence, Andrew Bridgman, launch a number of important future-facing documents, as discussed in my last Yours Aye. I note the challenges and opportunities they flag for us to work through as a nation and as a Navy, are critical to the future prosperity of Aotearoa. The korero associated with the Maritime Fleet Renewal project signals comfort to me that the future of a combat capable Navy is at the forefront of thinking. As a steward of Te Taua Moana o Aotearoa, I am comfortable that we are going in the right direction regards future ships, equipment, capabilities and sailors – he tangata being the most important part of our naval capability.

I thank you for the feedback provided in the Pulse 2023. While there was positive trending in some areas, in particular an improvement in the 'trust in direct managers/leaders', my attention was drawn to the poor results in relation to trust in senior leadership (which I interpreted to be in Captains through Admirals). There was a strong link between this area and 'poor communications from/with senior leaders'. I have undertaken to put significant focus and effort into improving communications, sharing the good and the not-so-good with you. You should expect to see increased opportunity to engage with senior leaders, where we talk a little, listen a lot, and respond to questions. Senior leaders are sometimes not able to provide the outcomes sailors want and deserve; however, I am committed to investing as much time and energy as is necessary to ensure we all understand the 'what', the 'how' and the 'why', of any issues that are raised or that we are working on.

The increase in time at sea for many of our newer sailors has provided professional challenges, new experiences, and a whole lot of fun. From the Maritime Training Group and MATATAUA working in all corners of the region and globe, CANTERBURY's work in the sub Antarctic Islands and during our Gabrielle response. TAUPO and MANAWANUI representing through the South West Pacific and around New Zealand, No. 6 Squadron generating aircraft and crews to join ships now and into the future, and PHILOMEL and the Leadership Development Group being the foundation of sailors and whānau at home, I have heard some great dits and seen some awesome photos of iwi heramana doing the mahi and having fun. And as I write this article, I'm mindful the year is about to conclude with TE MANA and AOTEAROA returning from a highly successful deployment over the last half of the year, with multiple South China Sea transits and South East Asia engagements. Our work alongside partners and friends in the region sees a return to our regular engagement with them, and is a very clear demonstration of our commitment to upholding international law and the rules-based system. AOTEAROA remains the tanker of choice for our friends and partners, and notable was TE MANA's highly successful missile firings off Australia. These firings proved an important benefit of the investment government made in the Frigate Systems Upgrade.

Lastly, the year concludes with a joint Junior Officer and Basic Common Training graduation ceremony, BZ Awards and Champion of the Navy event. I look forward to seeing many of you at these events, and perhaps creating a few more of those fun memories.

Shipmates and whānau, I thank you for your mahi and support to our Navy this year. I am both confident and proud that we have definitely executed our mission of Advancing New Zealand's interests from the sea in 2023.

Stay safe over the Christmas New Year break, rest up with family, have fun... and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

He heramana ahau.

**Rear Admiral David Proctor**  
Chief of Navy



# SAILOR OF THE YEAR

## *Leading Writer Joanna Mafi*

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LTWR Mafi excitedly accepted her award last month in front of her Navy colleagues, her mother, Salome, and sister Paulie, at a ceremony in the Wardroom at HMNZS PHILOMEL.

She couldn't be there herself, serving on board HMNZS MANAWANUI in the Pacific. She accepted via a live Microsoft Teams link from Fiji where the ship had been conducting Operation Calypso – as well as being involved in delivering relief supplies following Cyclone Mal.

Her former Commanding Officer, Commander Andy Dowling, has described her as a “tremendous asset”, during a 14-month posting to the Maritime Training Group. “Her diligence, tenacity and utterly infectious enthusiasm are something to behold,” he said in his nomination. “The RNZN would find no finer ambassador than LWTR Mafi.

LWTR Mafi was born and raised in Auckland, attending McAuley High School. She joined the Royal New Zealand Navy in February 2019, completing Basic Branch Training and Branch Training before posting to the Fleet Personnel Training Organisation (FPTO) as an Ordinary Writer. LWTR Mafi's sea service has included postings to HMNZ Ships CANTERBURY, TE KAHA and MANAWANUI.

In 2019 on completion of her training LWTR Mafi was posted to FPTO in the documents office, before briefly posting to HMNZS Canterbury and then back to FPTO.

In 2020 LWTR Mafi posted to HRSC in Wellington where she gained promotion to Able Writer in March of that year. LWTR Mafi then posted back to FPTO, but this was during the COVID Pandemic where she was employed at the Managed Isolation Facilities.

Later that year LWTR Mafi got a short notice posting overseas where she joined HMNZS TE KAHA during her upgrade in Canada.

In 2022 LWTR Mafi completed her Leading Writers Professional Course before returning to HMNZS TE KAHA until August of that year. LWTR Mafi then posted to the Maritime Training Group (MTG) (formerly MOET) in an administration role.

During 2023, LWTR Mafi completed her Leading Rates Development Course and her Damage Control Team Leaders Course before posting back to MTG, and gaining her promotion to Leading Writer in March. In August LWTR Mafi started her next sea posting in HMNZS MANAWANUI.

Her citation, based on her posting at MTG, says LWTR Mafi excels at all she does. “Meticulous in her attention to detail, tenacious in her approach to challenges as well as being relentlessly cheerful, LWTR Mafi is simply a fantastic member of our organisation. Always willing to go out of her way in order to facilitate the often dynamic nature of MTG and to deploy to provide shore support to the team.

“LWTR Mafi has demonstrated that she can work well in a very demanding role with a smile on her face and a constant willingness to do the best that she can in all she turns her hand to.”



# MISSILES AWAY

Two successful missile firings from HMNZS TE MANA signalled the final tick for both TE MANA and HMNZS TE KAHA's capability release following their Frigate Systems Upgrade.

In the last week of November HMNZS TE MANA conducted two Sea Ceptor surface-to-air missile firings in the East Australia Exercise Area, which completes the final part of the frigate's testing and evaluation process.

This was the first test firing of the Sea Ceptor since the Anzac-class frigates had installed the missile system during their combat, surveillance and counter-measures upgrade in Canada.

The 'threats' were uncrewed aerial platforms, two-metre long drones, simulating inbound missiles. One was aimed at TE MANA and, two days later, one was targeted away from TE MANA to replicate an attack on another vessel operating with the ship.

The ship's Combat Management System identified and classified both threats and Sea Ceptor missiles were launched, intercepting and destroying the targets.

All other aspects of the Anzac frigates' surveillance, counter measures, self-defence capability and Combat Management System have already been proven. This now means the frigates move from a solely 'defend self' position to a 'defend others' capability which allows for missile defence of any other platform the frigates are operating with.

According to the manufacturer, the 3.2-metre Sea Ceptor has a range in excess of 25 kilometres.





An aerial photograph of a harbor in Honiara, Solomon Islands. In the foreground, the grey naval ship HMNZS AOTEAROA is being pushed by several small orange tugboats. Behind it, the larger grey landing ship HMAS CHOULES is docked at a pier. The pier is cluttered with numerous colorful shipping containers in shades of red, blue, yellow, and green. The harbor is surrounded by lush green hills and a town with various buildings. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is clear with some light clouds.

# AOTEAROA IN THE SOLOMONS

Two great photos courtesy of the Australian Defence Force of HMNZS AOTEAROA being pushed by tugs against landing ship HMAS CHOULES in Honiara, Solomon Islands. CHOULES is in Honiara to support the Solomon Islands during the Pacific Games.

While in Australia, AOTEAROA picked up and delivered freshwater, marine diesel and two refrigerated containers of provisions for CHOULES.



A large grey naval ship, HMNZS Aotearoa, is at sea. In the background, a large offshore vessel, possibly an oil rig or platform, is visible. The scene is set against a clear blue sky and calm sea. The ship's mast and various antennas are prominent.

# HMNZS AOTEAROA'S NEW COMMANDING OFFICER

Enter the bridge of HMNZS AOTEAROA first thing in the morning and you'll likely find Commander Rob Welford drinking his coffee with a big smile on his face.

CDR Welford is the newest Commanding Officer of Aotearoa and has served in two navies for thirty-seven years.

"Quite simply, I can't think of anything else I would rather be doing."

CDR Welford took command of AOTEAROA on 24 October from Commander Dave Barr while the ship was alongside in Singapore, having concluded Exercise Bersama Lima 23 (*Navy Today* November 2023). He sailed into the South China Sea that very day.

He joined the Royal New Zealand Navy in August 2014 after nearly 28 years in the Royal Navy, where he saw operational service in the Adriatic, Northern Ireland, Iraq and Bosnia. He has served as Executive Officer in HM Ships ARUN and CAMPBELTOWN.



"I come from a small village just outside Oxford, but moved to Ilfracombe in North Devon before I was 10. It's a seaside resort and fishing town so I grew up by the sea, worked on fishing boats and was a Sea Cadet from about age 12. Sea Cadets gave me exposure to the Royal Navy through sports weekends and other activities, and with a growing love of the sea, a career doing something I enjoyed seemed like a natural option. And here I still am."

His move to New Zealand came through looking for something new in his career.

"I was fortunate enough to meet some RNZN and wider NZDF personnel through some multi-national engagements that I was the British Navy representative for at the time.

"I also got to attend a couple of meetings in New Zealand and through talking to people I thought that I might be able to put my





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**In just my first two weeks in command we have replenished Australian, United States, and Canadian Navy warships, ... transit through the South China Sea, exercised with the Philippines Navy, and hosted an official reception alongside in Manila.”**

knowledge and skills to some good in the RNZN. In particular my amphibious experience was relevant as it was just as the NZDF was developing the Joint Amphibious Task Group concept. Also, my son was eight at the time, and New Zealand looked like a good place for him to grow up with all of the opportunities that the country has to offer.”

Since joining the RNZN, CDR Welford has served in operational roles including deploying to Vanuatu following Tropical Cyclone Pam in 2015, and as the Executive Officer to the Force Commander of the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai Peninsula in 2020, where he was awarded a Force Commander's commendation. More recently he has served as the Deputy Director for Global Operations in HQJFNZ, where he was involved in the planning and execution of operations including the evacuation from Afghanistan in 2021 and the ongoing NZDF contribution to Ukraine's self defence throughout 2022.

It's an interesting challenge fitting into a well-established team part-way through a deployment, he says.

“First and foremost I demonstrate to them that they can have professional faith in me. The actions and decisions I make could easily affect their safety. I have a lot of experience but the Ship's Company haven't seen that, so making sure I did a good job of ship-handling as we left port from Singapore only three hours after the Change of Command ceremony helped to start that impression.”

It's a new class of ship for him, he says. “It's a big challenge learning how it works, and the only way to tackle that is to put the time in to learn, ask questions, walk the patch and get into in the books.”

He describes his leadership style as 'enabling'.

“They know where they need to go and I see it as my job to help them to get there. Sometimes the directions might need to be quite clear, but I would prefer to give them a metaphorical map, to help them find their own way as most of the time they know their parts of the ship better than I do.”

CDR Welford likes the two H's of leadership: Humanity and Humility.

“You need to remember that your people are human, and that you are too, and that very few human beings are perfect. If you then have enough humility to be able to admit you are not perfect, own your mistakes, and apologise if you are wrong, then that will set a good climate from which to build your team, or in my case Ship's Company.”

He enjoys the spirit of AOTEAROA's Ship's Company in what has been a busy deployment.

“In just my first two weeks in command we have replenished Australian, United States, and Canadian Navy warships, demonstrated New Zealand's commitment to the International Law of the Sea during a transit through the South China Sea, exercised with the Philippines Navy, and hosted an official reception alongside in Manila, including the Ambassadors of eleven nations, Members of the Philippines parliament, very senior Philippines Military Officers, and even more nations' Defence Attaches and other VIPs. At every turn AOTEAROA's sailors have had a smile on their face and put 100 percent effort into everything they have done. I certainly couldn't ask for more.”

# MEET OUR AOTEAROA PEOPLE



## Sub Lieutenant Georgia Ogilvie

Assistant Maritime Logistics  
Officer (AMLO)

I am 26 years old and I joined the Navy in 2021, JOCT intake 21-02. I grew up in the small town of Thames but have lived in many parts of New Zealand; Tauranga, Wellington, New Plymouth, and most recently Auckland.

Prior to joining the RNZN, I completed a Certificate in Advanced Personal Training in 2016, I then went on to study a Bachelor of Sport and Recreation at Toi-Ohomai Institute of Technology, completing my degree at the end of 2019. In 2020, I worked as the Development Officer at Taranaki Hockey, where I travelled round Taranaki teaching hockey in primary schools, and running hockey programs for both children and adults.

In 2020 I applied to join the Navy. COVID-19 was still very new, no-one really knew the impacts it was going to have on the job market, and my employer at the time had said they didn't know if there would be funding for my role the following year.

I had always considered joining the Navy but never really knew what to join as, I decided it might be time to do a bit more research. I initially joined the RNZN as a Watchkeeper in the General List Executive Branch,

changing over to a Maritime Logistics Officer in late 2022. I posted to HMNZS AOTEAROA in June 2023, almost immediately deploying on Operation Crucible 2023. The highlight of the deployment has been the countries I have seen and the relationships I have formed with the Ship's Company.

I am very passionate about sport, particularly hockey, football and swimming. I play hockey for Hibiscus Dairy Flat, a club in the North Shore, and football for Takapuna, another club on the Shore. I train for these once a week and play both games on a Sunday. Since being deployed, the Navy has recently started up a swimming club which I am very excited to be a part of once the ship returns to New Zealand.



## Ordinary Marine Technician Sean Folley

Hi, I'm 20 years old and I joined the Navy in 2021 just after finishing up school at Rotorua Lakes High School. I am originally from Rotorua and now currently based in Auckland with my partner.

I became interested in a career in the NZDF at the start of high school. I was lucky enough to have some role models I looked up to who were serving in the NZDF. They spoke about the places they had been and things their careers had taught them, from there I knew the Navy was the perfect place for me.

An average day for me in AOTEAROA starts off with a morning PT session either on the flight deck or in the hangar. After that we get ready for the day ahead. I have a morning meeting with the rest of the Engineering department to lay out the plan for the day. As a Marine Technician, our days are spent conducting maintenance on all sorts of equipment and keeping the ship running as it should. We are also involved in whole ship activities including damage control and replenishing other vessels. Mealtime is always something to look forward to as the Chefs on board put up really good meals three times a day.

This deployment has been a really positive experience for me. Being from a small town, the hustle and bustle of South East Asia can be a big adjustment. Learning new things about different cultures and ways of life has been one of my favourite parts of the trip. Working with other navies is another experience I have really valued. The best part of this was when we spent a day playing sports and socialising with sailors from the Australian Navy, Singapore Navy and Malaysian Navy on a small island off the coast of Malaysia.

For anyone thinking of joining the Navy, it is very much worth it. The Navy is great for people from all walks of life, it's a great organisation with opportunities around every corner. In my case I'm a really keen footballer and currently play for the Navy, another great Navy experience. Whether its sport, stability or a sense of belonging, the Navy has something for everyone and that's what makes it so much more than just a job.





*Above: HMNZS AOTEAROA arrives back in Sydney following its South East Asia deployment.*

*AOTEAROA offloading containers in the Solomon Islands.*



## **Able Logistics Supply Specialist Zack Talataina**

Talofa Lava, I'm Zack and I'm 21 years of age.

After graduating from Mount Albert Grammar in 2019 Navy didn't really pop into my head until one of my close friends mentioned to me that he was joining the Navy. He told me that Navy would be a perfect job for me knowing I can travel to different countries and meet new people across the globe from different backgrounds and religions. Another motivation was that none of my family members served in the NZDF, so me wanting to be the first one in the family was a huge goal to achieve and would definitely be something for my family to be proud of. Ever since I was a young kid I always wanted to be something for my family to be proud of, And the Navy was that perfect something.

So I joined the Navy intake of 22/01, I then went off to a eight-week Basic branch training course for the trade Logistics Supply Specialist.

On board AOTEAROA we usually deal with customers' orders/queries. Basically, we usually are the team that supplies parts or items for the ship to allow certain departments on board maintain the ship. A normal day out at sea for me usually starts off with a PT session around 6am then work at 8am then either finish early which is 1500 or normal time which is 1600. I then go to gym around that time then have dinner which is the meal I always look forward to knowing the chefs on board are the best.

My highlights of this deployment so far is getting to go to countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and seeing the different scenery and the way people are in those countries. Another highlight is being able to conduct Replenishment At Sea with other navy ships. Being the only tanker in New Zealand it was a perfect opportunity to learn more about what tanker ships actually do and the massive role a tanker has.

My advice to anyone wanting to join the Navy or still deciding if it's something you want to do, just do it. I reckon it's a perfect job for anyone that loves a challenge in life, and there is a lot of opportunities that you get being a sailor in the RNZN.



## **Able Seaman Combat Specialist Tayla Taupaki**

After finishing school at Whangamata Area School in 2020, I decided to join the RNZN in the Basic Common Training intake for 22/01. Throughout high school I always wanted to have a career that involved being full-on, travelling the world and helping people any way I can. With having a few whānau members that have served in the RNZN and hearing their stories, it was one of the many reasons I decided to join the RNZN. I'm 20 years old.

As an Seaman Combat Specialist on board HMNZS AOTEAROA for Bersama Lima 2023, our main role was to be able to Replenish-At-Sea (RAS) other ships when they needed fuel. It's a big evolution that involves all SCS and other members of the Ship's Company. It was a good opportunity to gain some experience.

An average day for me on AOTEAROA usually starts off with being on watch throughout the middle of the night. From here we have our daily morning meeting with the rest of the Seamanship Combat Specialists and plan for the day ahead. Our days usually consist of doing a RAS with another Navy ship, using the RHIB and doing some boat work and also doing jobs to maintain our ship. After a day at work, we always try to make time for a PT session either at our gym on ship or on the flight deck. By the time that finishes it's 1730 and our chefs have put up another mean feed for the Ship's Company to enjoy.

The highlight of our deployment so far would have to be finally meeting up with HMNZS TE MANA on our way to Vietnam and doing a RAS with them. Since both ships are close together when doing a RAS it was easy to spot some of my friends and be able to wave at them. It was a cool experience to do this with them as both ships had been away from their whānau and friends so seeing some familiar faces was exciting.

I have had many opportunities and experiences in my Navy career so far. Some include playing for the RNZN Women's Basketball team versus the Air Force and Army. This was a fun experience as I was able to meet new people all throughout the NZ Defence Force and share our stories.

I would tell anyone that is thinking of joining the RNZN is just give it a go. There are so many opportunities you can experience in the Navy that you can't get anywhere else. From sports to travelling around the world to meeting the same like-minded people.



A large grey naval ship, HMNZS MANAWANUI, is shown from a side-on perspective, sailing on a deep blue ocean. The ship has a complex superstructure with various antennas and equipment. In the background, a green, hilly coastline is visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The ship's hull number 'A09' is visible on its side.

# HMNZS MANAWANUI LEVELS UP IN THE PACIFIC

Maritime security patrols, hydrographic surveys and disaster relief – a busy schedule for a versatile ship.

During November and December HMNZS MANAWANUI undertook Operation Calypso, with Niue the first stop in a seven-week deployment to the South Pacific.

While in Niue, MANAWANUI embarked people from various Niuean authorities 120 nautical miles out to sea, to conduct an environmental inspection at Beveridge Reef.

Once back on the mainland, the Ship's Company visited schools and hosted a 'women in maritime' networking event.

In Fiji, on-board hydrographers from HMNZS MATATAUA joined forces with surveyors from the Republic of Fiji Military Forces to conduct maritime surveys, including a long-overdue upgrade to data gathered in the 19th century.

Hydrographer Lieutenant Samuel Kinghorn, RN, on exchange, says they undertook surveys around Kadavu, south of Fiji, to support coverage of Fiji's deep water measurements. The effort is part of 'Seabed 2030', a global initiative to achieve a complete map of the ocean floor by 2030.

"The next AGM for Seabed 2030 is taking place in Fiji so they are working on being ready for that," says LT Kinghorn. "The most recent charts of this area were made with a deadline in 1876 so they're a bit overdue for an update."

Another tasking was taking geodetic measurements of a primary benchmark on Dravuni Island, a mark used to support shallow water measurements undertaken by the Fijian Hydrographic Office. Establishing the height of the mark, using GPS equipment, above a mathematical ellipsoid (an approximation of the shape of the earth) means the Fijian Hydrographic Office's data can now relate to other depths based on the same ellipsoid.

"We identified other nearby marks and levelled in their relationship to the primary mark. If the primary mark is destroyed you have these as a backup."

A kava ceremony was held on the island as part of relationship-building with Fiji. The data gathered is processed in Fiji before being forwarded to the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office for inclusion on charts.

MANAWANUI had to be mindful of Category 3 Tropical Cyclone Mal, and at one point kept to the north-east of the Fiji mainland to escape its effects. Following a request from the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), the ship called into Suva and embarked six people from the NDMO and supporting organisations, along with two 20-foot containers holding approximately 700 bags of food.



The ship visited Vatulele, Malolo, Mamanuca, Viwa, Waya and the Yasawa Islands off Viti Levu, giving NDMO personnel the opportunity to conduct initial damage assessments and deliver supplies.

The *NZ Herald* reported MANAWANUI's crew were a hit with villagers, with Navy members gifting rugby balls to local children.

Commander Yvonne Gray, Commanding Officer MANAWANUI, says Operation Calypso had been a great opportunity to regenerate the Royal New Zealand Navy while also catching up with New Zealand's neighbours in the Pacific.

"The visit to Niue enabled us to strengthen the bond between our two countries and the additional visit to the Beveridge Reef was one of those experiences which money just cannot buy. Being able to conduct a detailed survey in collaboration with the MATATAUA hydrographers, and the Fijian Navy, further builds the Littoral Warfare capability."

During the disaster relief work, the teams visited 35 villages in just four days. "This was a significant achievement for the NDMO and the Ship's Company, some of whom accompanied the teams ashore.

*Clockwise: CDR Yvonne Gray and her Executive Officer, LTCDR Matthew Gajzago, consult on the bridge; a pair of Seaman Combat Specialists prepare for a gunnery exercise with the .50 calibre machine gun; ASCS Toby Jarvie ashore after delivering some aid stores to a village; a RHIB delivery of aid ashore on Malolo Island.*

“

**The chance to react and provide support to Fiji following Tropical Cyclone Mal demonstrates, yet again, the flexibility of maritime assets at sea; one day conducting survey, the next delivering relief supplies. The mahi has not been easy, we will have completed a month at sea without going alongside, but the rewards have been awesome.”**



# Mobilising networks for gender equality



Speech (abridged) by Commander Yvonne Gray, Commanding Officer HMNZS MANAWANUI, during a Women's Networking Event in Niue.

**How can we make the maritime environment and, specifically, the various industries more appealing, more credible, more accessible for women?**

In my experience, getting things done, getting things changed is about the people. Policy is very important but if the people are not willing to work within the policy then it's just empty words on a page. To my mind, creating networks for women is just one way in which people might see how to change and, why to change. But, more importantly, a network provides a 'safety net' for those women making the changes.

I joined the Royal Navy in 1993, only two years since the policy had changed allowing women to go to sea. It was lovely words on a page but really the senior leadership, the commanding officers, in fact anyone with any kind of authority really, they had no clue.

I was lucky in that I joined with some fantastic people, men and women, who just got on with the task in hand. But once I was in my first proper job, as the Navigating Officer of a small ship, I was one of two women on board. I shared a cabin with the other woman and generally we got along okay.

**Were we there for each other?**

Probably not. Did we share our hopes and fears? Nope. We were too busy trying to survive and not 'let the side down' to appreciate how we could have been kinder to one another.

A fact which was wholly borne out to me when she attempted suicide. She survived, just. But I have to tell you, and to my shame, I was so angry with her. I was angry because I felt she had given the naysayers the very reason as to why women should not be at sea.

I loved my job, I worked hard, had high professional standards but I certainly failed in looking after my cabin mate. What has this got to do with networks?

If there had been some sort of network for women, a place to come together to share ideas or worries in a safe environment then, perhaps, my cabin mate would have found the support she needed. Perhaps we'd have had the language to help one another?

I will give you three things to consider when we talk about networks and, specifically, women's networks. Firstly, why do you want it? Secondly, how will it be maintained? And third, how will you measure success?

Advocacy is a 'why'. You might need the network to lead on issues, like equal pay, parental rights, quotas. And if advocacy is your goal then you may also want to think about ensuring you have men in the room too. Men who are willing to be advocates for you, and for the men in maritime today please consider this. Real strength comes from working together to make it better for everyone.

It's also about visibility. There's a saying: you can't be it, if you can't see it. When I joined the Royal Navy I really did not consider that I would ever drive a ship.

There were no female Commanding Officers. I was the first female navigator in the Royal Navy, I was the first woman to do something called the Mine Warfare Officers course. I was the first female Operations Officer, the first female Executive Officer, I was only the fourth woman to complete the Principal Warfare Officers' course.

I can tell you, breaking ground is hard work, and having no one to follow creates a pressure all of its own. But junior women could see me. If I could do it, then anyone could. So a network of women, showing up, talking to young people, being visible – there's enormous value in that.

A major 'why' is support. I am currently part of a Wahine Toa WhatsApp group with a bunch of female Commanders and Captains from the RNZN. We share stories, we get together when we can, and, generally, are there for each other. Honestly, the power in the room when we come together – it's awesome. It gives me this feeling of great strength.

**How do you measure success?**

It could be about doubling the number of women working in your organisation. Perhaps it's about all people feeling supported. Or it could be how your network makes the participants smile and feel like they are being heard.

**How do you maintain it?**

My experience has demonstrated to me that networks will only endure by one of two ways; either there's one driven individual who keeps it going or two, everyone in the network believes in it, strives to keep it going and participates. Get a group like that and you'll conquer the world!



## NAVY MUSEUM AWARDED GOLD QUALMARK

The National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy has been awarded Gold Qualmark Certification.

Qualmark works with Tourism NZ to help the tourism industry deliver high quality experiences and maintain a high level of visitor satisfaction.

Museum director David Wright said the team was delighted to be awarded a Gold Level of Certification.

"The Gold award is a prestigious achievement and reflects the Navy Museum's commitment to our mission and to our continuous improvement efforts. It reflects the outstanding effort by our team over a long period of time."

The citation from Qualmark says it has broadened the scope of its evaluation criteria to recognise those businesses that are focused on protecting what makes New Zealand unique and special.



**Your award can be proudly displayed as evidence that Torpedo Bay Navy Museum is committed to protecting our beautiful natural environment, enhancing connections with our local communities, whilst also delivering a quality, safe experience for all visitors."**

*From left, Euan Blake - Museum Guide, Grant Ward - Senior Qualmark Specialist - Experiences, David Wright - Director Navy Museum, Marica McEwan - Visitor Services Manager and Andrew Hart - Museum Guide. Photo: Kathryn Nobbs.*





## TRAINING FIJIAN SAILORS IN CRUCIAL FIREFIGHTING SKILLS

The Maritime Training Group's deployable teams have been put to use again in the Pacific, focusing on Fiji and Samoa last month.

The Maritime Training Team worked with the crew of the RFNS VOLASIGA in Suva to carry out training in firefighting, leak stopping and Damage Control Breathing Apparatus.

Starting with practical first aid firefighting using carbon dioxide (CO2) and dry powder extinguishers, the Fijian sailors initially worked on tackling diesel pit fires on the training ground at the Republic of Fiji Navy Training Base, RFNS VITI, before carrying out drills training in the fire unit.

The personnel were then able to go through a series of fire exercise scenarios with training smoke on board oceanic survey vessel VOLASIGA.

Team leader, Lieutenant Commander Ray McLaughlin, said fire was one of the most dangerous things that could happen on a ship.

"If you have a fire on a ship when you're at sea, it not only threatens the physical platform that's keeping you out of the water, but can also disable your electrical or mechanical systems, which can lead to power loss and inability to control the ship, and that may result in a collision or grounding," he said.

"Being able to effectively suppress a fire is a crucial skill for sailors, and we've really enjoyed working with the Fijian Navy on this training course."

The MTG is most often used to train Navy personnel in New Zealand, but it's more frequently being asked to work with other Pacific nations.

Members of the MTG also visited Samoa last month to train with the Samoan Maritime Police.



*CPOSCS Michael McMahon, part of the Maritime Training Team working with Fijian Navy in Suva.*



*LTCDR Elizabeth Lewer reacts to a story at the funeral service of long-time Navy civilian employee Tania Turner.*



*Wilson Trumper is promoted to Captain by Commander INDOPACOM Admiral John Aquilino.*

# OUR P



*BCT 23/02 trainees jogging back from Sea Survival training.*



*LTCDR Michael Dowrick, RNZN Band director, leads the band in Warkworth during Armistice Day commemorations.*



*LTCDR Ray McLaughlin, MTG, and LWTR Joanna Mafi, Sailor of the Year, congratulate Fijian Navy personnel on completion of a Maritime Training Team course.*





*WOCSS John Leybourne, MTG, poses beside Fiji Navy Ordinary Seaman L Sevutia following a successful Maritime Training Team course in Suva.*



*Deputy Chief of Navy CDRE Andrew Brown speaks at the funeral service of long-time Navy civilian employee Tania Turner.*



*OCT Puti Pomare salutes Admiral Sir Ben Key, the First Sea Lord, as he arrives at Pukeahu National War Memorial.*

# PEOPLE



*WOPTI Wade Sharland receives a CN Commendation for pioneering a first-of-its-kind 10-week te reo Māori course.*



*POMT(L) Kandra Kauwhata gives a virtual reality training system a go.*



*AMTO Caoimhe Lane, beside AMTO Michael Bresler, comes to grips with the intricacies of kit at HMNZS OLPHERT.*



# Navy joins the team at Government House

A lot of very important people pass through Government House, something two Navy personnel have become accustomed to as part of an unusual posting to Wellington.

Able Steward Karen Brown and Able Chef Nadia Mwila are at the end of a six-month posting to the Governor General's residence in Wellington, as part of a household team managing the day-to-day routines and special functions that come with the job of the Governor General of New Zealand.

ASTD Brown, from Gisborne, and ACH Mwila, from Wellington, say it's been an enjoyable posting and an amazing experience for their tradecraft. Although it used to be a regular posting a long time ago, what they're doing is seen as a trial, with the possibility of other Navy personnel following after them.

ASTD Brown asked for the posting, seeing it as an opportunity to further her steward skills and enhance hospitality in the Defence Force.

"It's pretty similar to day-to-day at the officers' wardroom," says ASTD Brown. "We have a daily lunch and dinner routine. But then there are the informal and formal events,



so it's not like a set routine that you'd have on base. Having a flexible background already, it made it easy to maintain it here. You could have a formal dinner one day, then a formal lunch tomorrow, or a morning tea or afternoon tea. One day we had two Prime Ministers attending for a formal dinner, and that went really well."





What stood out for her is the daily interaction with Their Excellencies. “They go into really small detail in the day-to-day routines, and then the fine detail that goes into the functions. And the passion they put into it. It really kick-started my mojo, ignited my passion for hospitality. I wear the staff uniform and blend in with the team.”

She says there are a lot of staff at the house who make you feel very welcome, and more casual staff can be called in for big events. “For a formal dinner we have a wine steward, a team for food service and clearing, there’s staff rotating around the tables, observing, making sure

people have what they need. Once staff started to realize I was also in the Navy, they become quite curious about my role and the Navy. The most common question that comes up ‘Why the Navy? Two points, my great-grandmother served and the opportunities, like my time here at Government House, for the amount of travel that is out there. Perhaps I might inspire someone to join!’

Her advice to stewards following after her is to be patient and be ready to embrace a routine that isn’t a routine – each day is different. “Communication between what you’re used to in the Navy and in the civilian job can be different. Military have a way of talking with each other and it’s a different environment here, definitely in a good way. When there is some down time at the house, I was able to attend a Kaupapa with other NZDF Personnel. I would love to see this going for 12 months, and get more responsibility and more independence, but that’s a long time out of uniform.”

ASTD Brown joined the Navy in 2019, attracted to the idea of travel. COVID-19 curtailed that a bit, but she’s had a posting to HMNZS TE MANA, bringing the ship from Canada after its Frigate Systems Upgrade. “I love being part of a Ship’s Company, taking on challenges and making new friends.”

ACH Mwila says she was offered the posting and thought it sounded interesting. “I wanted to see what it would be like working as a chef at that level,” she says.

“I work with a head chef, sous chef and another chef. We do daily meals for the Governor General and staff – lunch and dinner. Lunch and dinner service is rather like the wardroom service on base. Then we have functions. It can be busy, but it can be quiet as well. We had Prince Edward here recently, so we had a lot of people here.”

The pair usually work from 9am to 5pm, or 11am to 7pm, and sometimes in the weekend. “With someone in charge it’s not too hard, but the hours are probably more than in the Navy.”

She’s glad she opted for the chance to work at an elite level of dining and functions. “I’m learning skills from chefs who have had many years of experience in restaurants,” she says. “If you like wardroom-like functions and want to take it to the next level, this is ideal. The head chef is really helpful. If you want to learn something, do something or work on something, he’s got lot of connections and could connect you up with a restaurant.”



# Medic training through covid lockdowns

It's a small class but a punchy three years of study and training. *Navy Today* talks to the Nealis class of medics graduating from Defence Health School.

Able Medical Assistant Olivia Jones says initial stages of medic branch training might be heavily classroom-based, but it gets pretty hands-on later.

AMA Jones was the top student in her class of 10, who graduated at Burnham on 15 November. She also won the He Whakaatu Nui award, presented to the student who best demonstrated the attributes required of a New Zealand Defence Force medical practitioner in the specific areas of Competence, Reliability, Compassion, and Care.

The Nealis class is named for its patron Wing Commander (rtd) Paul Nealis, former Chief Medical Officer at the Defence Health Directorate.

The school has two intakes a year, one in January and the other in June/July. The course involves a four-

month period of Auckland University of Technology (AUT) study on arrival, followed by four modules completed over the remaining 32 months, including holidays (see next page).

The medics gain AUT qualifications along the way in the form of the Diploma in Paramedic Science followed by the Graduate Certificate. Medics can then move onto the degree programme and work towards the Bachelor in Health Science (Paramedicine) if they wish to, once they have posted to their new units.

AMA Jones, 21, from Tauranga, says she was inspired by her grandfather, a former Navy man who shared photos of his adventures with her. "He got paid to travel the world," she says.

She graduated from Basic Common Training in December 2020 and came to Burnham to start her medic training.

"It was pretty challenging with COVID lockdowns," she says. "I was in barracks and you had to keep to your 'bubble'. It meant there was distance learning and it's hard to do some of this online. But it went pretty well."

The course gets hands-on with class members working with St John's Ambulance, and the field exercises were fun, she says.

"You're not thrown in at the deep end," she says. "With the practical side, you get eased into it, and they slowly put more and more scenarios at you."

The final field exercise, held in Tekapo, combines training completed throughout the four modules. The students are treated as if they were fully qualified medics, enabling them to graduate with confidence and understanding of what will be required of them on posting to their new units.

AMA Jones says being away from home for three years was tough, and after three years in Christchurch you "kind of lose the Navy vibe. But it was great to be in such a close-knit class."

Graduating was cool, she says. "My granddad was on Facetime the whole time and my parents came down."

She's hoping to be deployed next year. "My BCT class that I graduated with in 2020, they've been everywhere and doing all sorts."





## MODULES

### Military Medical Technician Primary Health Care

30 weeks residential training

12 weeks of On the Job Experience (OJE) – this is currently shifts with St John Ambulance

### Military Medical Technician Operational Health Care

9 weeks residential training

12 weeks OJE

### NZDF Medic Primary Health Care

12 weeks residential training

8 weeks OJE

### NZDF Medic Operational Health Care

16 weeks residential training

Final field exercise

Final 8 weeks OJE

Graduation!



Private Justin Zarandona, from Christchurch, has parents who are both nurses. "My Dad was pretty keen on my joining the military, he had wanted to be an officer in the Philippines. We've been in New Zealand 10 years. I did my Army basic training for four months at Waiouru, then came down here."

He loved the practical side of the course. "I prefer the practical aspects of training over the academic work. But it's hard doing practicals during COVID lockdowns when you're on a Zoom meeting."

The field exercise in Tekapo was great, he says. His class was dealing with a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief scenario, a Cyclone Gabrielle situation superimposed into Tekapo. It's not a scenario where you turn up with no idea of what's ahead. "You get informed by radio of an idea of patients there and the priority of them. The weather really turned it on for us, with a bit of snow. It was a really good experience."

His advice to those considering the medic trade is that it is a hard course but worth it. "Just do it. The staff take care of you pretty well. And we were a very tight group, even with a bit of inter-Service rivalry and banter."

# Through a mother's eyes



Jo Priestley writes about the tugs on the heart mingled with pride and celebration as her teenage son trains as a Navy sailor.

My son, Alex Greig, 18, at time of writing, is mid-way through his Navy recruit course, BCT 23/2 at Devonport Auckland. Once he's graduated in December, he will begin training on base as a chef.

As a single parent with one child, the recruitment and enlistment process has been a rollercoaster of emotions. Pride that he's chosen such a wonderful career, and sadness that he will be living in another city, 6.5 hours drive away.

The journey has been different for us both. Alex's journey was one of excitement, mine was a feeling of impending loss. Alex looked at the Navy with a view to travel, camaraderie, and pride at serving

one's country. I scrutinised the Navy as a potential employer and caretaker of my son. Alex researched recruit training and life on board a ship. He wanted to know what a chef got paid and whether he could advance in his career. I researched war zones and health benefits. But we both came to the same conclusion – the Royal New Zealand Navy was the right fit for us both. The Navy would mould him into a strong, resourceful, independent and confident sailor, and they would care for his emotional, physical and psychological needs in lieu of his family.

Our course was set. The Navy it was.

During Alex's recruitment process he received great support and advice from the recruitment team in Palmerston North. The best piece of advice they gave him was to join Force Fit – fitness training held twice a week, run by the Defence Force. Alex told me later that if he hadn't gone to Force Fit, he probably wouldn't have passed the entry fitness test, and said it made training as a recruit much easier.

There were some compromises along the way. I insisted Alex stay at Feilding High School until he was recruited and to complete NCEA Level 3. I felt it was important that he didn't close any doors while he waited, just in case his life took a different path. I compromised by not nagging him about results, and perhaps, unsurprisingly, his grades were excellent. However, in the middle of Term 3 Alex was accepted into recruit training. He left school, and we started planning for his departure in August.

Another compromise was using the last few weeks at home to get our house and lifestyle block ready for solo management. Alex worked hard gib stopping and painting his room and outside we put up a few extra fences to help me manage the animals a bit easier.

It's hard planning for the departure of someone you love. There's excitement mingled with apprehension and sadness. But my planning brain took over and we put all our energy into putting together everything he needed







to take with him. Shorts, jandals and gumboots were traded for shiny black shoes, shirts with collars, a tie, a belt and a new jacket for shore leave. A note to other parents – Kiwi parade shoe polish is not made any more but is available on Amazon; see-through shower caps can be hard to find; and a squeegee for the tiled shower will come in handy. And don't forget plenty of writing paper with stamped envelopes, as the only communication you will get from your recruit in the first month or so is letters.

Before we knew it, we were at Palmerston North airport, ticket in hand and lots of last-minute photos and videos, hugs and tears. I harked back to my own departure for my big OE after finishing Uni and waving jauntily at my family as I went through the departure gate without a backward glance or care in the world. Now it was my turn and it felt like karma.

One of the hardest things to cope with initially was not knowing when I would hear from Alex again. We knew he would have to surrender his phone on arrival, as the Navy set about settling him in to his new normal. As a parent I knew that having no contact was best for the recruit and I understood the reasons behind it. However, getting an unexpected call on Father's Day (LOL) was wonderful. The next contact was about attending Church Day and the 18 hours of shore leave that would follow.

During this time Alex turned 18. He was allowed a phone call home, and he told me how they'd sung Happy Birthday to him and made it special for him during the day. I smiled and didn't mention my own birthday coming up in four days. Let him enjoy his cake.

Church Day was a revelation. Along with other teary parents lined up with cell phones held high, we watched with pride and swelling hearts our loved ones marching down the road towards us. The absolute concentration on their faces, the precision of their marching, and the smiles when dismissed and they could greet family, was a sight to behold. My son was now a man, walking with other men and women proud to serve their country. He was now part of something bigger than himself.

Church Day showed me how much pride recruits have in Navy history and in tradition. Alex took me to the Devonport Naval Museum and showed me the ship his unit was named after, HMS ACHILLES. We walked around and looked at the pictures of sailors that had served before him, so much more real now he was wearing the same uniform. A sobering moment as I mentally pictured Alex serving during WWII, his image in place of one of the other young people pictured on the wall, sailors that might not have survived.

I went home happy and reassured. Apart from being too skinny, he was thriving in his new life, and as a parent that's all you want to see. The other

revelation I learned during Church Day leave was the existence of a private Facebook group called the "Royal New Zealand Navy Leadership Development Group". How had I not known about this? All the pictures and updates I had craved for in those first few weeks were right there! I saw his first day, some of his new teammates (oppos), his first fitness test, training exercises including lying in a muddy pond in the middle of the night, and best of all, his attestation. To whoever takes these photos, thank you so much, and keep them coming. They are a life raft to family adrift at home wondering how they're getting on and missing them so much.

Now the countdown is on for graduation, and I'm looking forward to having Alex home for a few weeks before he leaves to start his training at Devonport Naval Base as a chef.

Looking back, the process has been equally joyful and painful. I allowed myself to feel the emotions, good and bad, and then focused on the positive aspects of this new chapter in both our lives. I reminded myself that he had worked hard to achieve this goal, and I needed to support him. I reminded myself that I had raised this wonderful person, and the timing was right for him to explore the world. Meanwhile, I've started a travel fund, just in case Alex goes somewhere exciting and gets shore leave, and wants a visitor, well, you just never know what life holds.

# Life on the Ice



■ **By Able Medic Abbey Brown**  
**Communications Operator,**  
**Scott Base**

## After many delays and 26 total flying hours, our summer team finally landed in Antarctica!

The NZDF contingent is made up of nine Army, Air Force and Navy personnel, all from different trades and parts of the country. Deploying to the ice for a six-month stint was a goal for many of us, including myself. I am very lucky to have this once-in-a-lifetime experience!

It didn't take long to settle in, and between base, equipment and vehicle inductions, fire-fighting training and learning our roles, we weren't short of things to do. One of the highlights so far is the opportunity to spend the night out on the ice shelf for AFT (Antarctic Field Training). This training helps us prepare for the adverse environment, and explore the recreational activities Antarctica has to offer including hikes, familiarisation trips to historical sites, and many more. The more important reason for AFT is to allow us to do our jobs, and support and enable the world-leading science and traverse events taking place.

One of my jobs as a communications operator is to keep in regular contact with all parties out in the field, and ensure that they are adequately supported to carry out their job. This is particularly rewarding, as I get to work and communicate with many different organisations and people. As the youngest person in the NZDF contingent, I was also given the privilege to lower the winter flag and raise the summer flag, signifying the start of the season.

The weather and daylight hours have been tricky to navigate, and are constantly changing. After only being here for one month so far we have seen a couple of serious storms, -40 degree temperatures and have lost the darkness altogether. Last night, we climbed one of the nearby hills to watch the sun set for the last time, and watch it rise again about one hour later. For the next few months, it will be daylight 24/7.

Although Scott Base is a small crew, there are regular opportunities to interact with our American neighbours over the hill (COVID permitting) at McMurdo Station. Sporting events and the Icestock festival – an all-day outdoor musical festival at McMurdo on or around New Year's Day – are a couple that I am looking forward to. Life on ice is pretty exciting, and I cannot wait to experience more and more as the season continues!





# Navy Virtual Reality creators are Innovators of the Year

Deployable virtual reality is close to becoming a reality in the training of Royal New Zealand Navy personnel, thanks to the ingenuity of two of its civilian members.

Navy Modelling and Simulation team members Karl Vetter and Kevin Heveldt were the winners of the New Zealand Defence Force Innovation of the Year Award, part of the Person of the Year Awards for 2023.

The pair have long recognised the need for sailors to receive realistic and real-life scenario-based training in order for the RNZN to be combat capable. Their aim is to move training into the digital world, reducing personnel resources, and allowing for flexibility and personalisation, while also improving safety and reducing the risk of accidents.

In partnership with StaplesVR, the team developed virtual reality training software to provide simulation training for radiation hazard training, gas turbine water wash, and ship induction safety officer training.

Mr Heveldt says the drivers for the team were to make people safer and more work-ready using technology that they could access anytime, anywhere.

The training programmes address specific “hurt points” or areas for improvement in Navy training.

“Being safe around radiation hazard areas on ships, understanding the protocols, and processes whilst staying safe when they visit or post to our ships and bases or qualifying our engineers in a high risk low frequency maintenance task - this tech is perfect to experience, train, and qualify.”

He says users, young and old, have loved the technology.

“Change is hard but our people recognise the potential of this kind of tech and it hasn’t been a hard sell. In fact the enthusiasm is such that there are two to four areas within Navy starting to build on what we have done to develop other VR-based solutions. We have had interest from across the NZDF on how we are engaging and momentum is growing through the organisation.”

The team is only weeks away from giving the modules to people on courses. “The follow-up next year is deploying headsets on ships. This is taking learning to the learners, and qualifications to the candidates, not the other way around.”

The technology no longer requires headsets tethered to cables. “The equipment comes in small cases, easily transported. Updates can be made over the internet.”

Mr Vetter says virtual reality training overcomes some of the bad habits of classroom and on-the-job training.

“Sometimes bad habits of the instructor can be passed onto the learner. This is either through the instructor not fully understanding the topic they are teaching, or because they are applying shortcuts without fully disclosing why. These habits are then used, and over time passed onto other people, thus leading to a degradation of knowledge.”

Virtual reality has no variance in teaching style. “It is always the same, as per the book, in an exacting manner. You must always do the correct task in the correct order, as the system is designed to not move on to the next step or task until the correct steps are completed.”

The big plus is the training can happen anywhere. “This means that the speed of learning can dramatically increase as the learner will learn as they use the trainer, as opposed to the pace which is dictated by availability of real world resources.”

The team is not just restricted to virtual reality. In progress are mixed reality solutions, where a real-world environment merges with a computer-generated one. “These are exciting as it will mean that digital models can be displayed to explain theoretical concepts or to practice operating without the real equipment or aircraft,” says Mr Heveldt. “This will be Pokemon-Go for the military!”

# TOP SHOT COMPETITION IS BACK

It's saying something to be the top shot for your ship or unit. But in future there could be a medal in it.

The Navy is reviving the annual intership shooting competition, which was last held in 1994. Last month personnel from HMNZ Ships CANTERBURY, MATATAUA, TAUPO and TE KAHA went head-to-head with the MARS-L rifle on ranges at Waiouru, in series of up to 300 metres.

MATATAUA took the title of top unit and two of its personnel, Able Seaman Combat Specialists Alex Pere and Blair Thomas, won best female and best male respectively.

The event was essentially a test-run for the competition's revival, with next year's event including the chance to earn the Queen's Medal for Champion Shots of the New Zealand Naval Forces, last awarded in 1989.

Warrant Officer Seaman Combat Specialist Ricky Derksen says the week-long event proved challenging, with most competitors having never shot to 300 metres before. The standard distance for the Navy's Annual Weapons Qualification is 25 metres.

"Chief of Navy wanted to bring back the skill of arms for personnel," says WOSCS Derksen. "He asked the Maritime Component Commander (MCC) to champion it and MCC got hold of me. We started planning this in January."

The competition involves four matches with timed serials ranging from 25 metres to 300 metres, covering all aspects of weapon handling and marksmanship, against stationary and kinetic targets.



Only the top ten shooters compete in the fourth match, and the winner of the medal will be the competitor with the highest aggregate score of the tournament. The top five shooters will go on to represent Navy in an inter-service competition.

The Navy has ranges at Whangaparāoa but the 300-metre range overlooks the sea. If a boat appears, it can't be used.

There are still a lot of details to fine-tune, says WOSCS Derksen. As in the past, the competition should also include pistol marksmanship. "And that's something we can do at Whangaparāoa, then come to Waiouru to shoot the MARS-L.

"Back in the day, you had to shoot 100 percent to get the medal. Do we still do that, or make it 90 percent? Do we bring back the marksman badge, which was for people who shot over 80 percent over three intership shoots?"

Even as a test run, the 17 firers and 15 staff had a good week. "Everyone shot well and had a great time. Not many people shoot at 300 metres, but the two SCS had done it before. The MARS-L is a very accurate weapon and can shoot to 400–500 metres, but when you get to 300 metres, it's the person that gets the points, not the rifle."

He is very grateful for the support of the Army's Small Arms Training Team, who put the competition together and the four Reserve Units who supplied the butts' party for the competition.

Former Chief Petty Officer Radio Electrical Artificer David Tonkin was the last person to win the Queen's Medal. It was his third time, receiving a second clasp.

He says it's great to hear the competition is being revived.

"I started shooting when I went to HMNZS IRIRANGI. All the guys I worked with were shooters. IRIRANGI had a whole culture of shooting in our spare time, and usually did well at the competition."

Back then the competition involved the 7.62mm L1A1 self-loading rifle (SLR), a sub-machine gun and the Browning Hi-Power pistol.

"The accuracy of the L1A1 was awesome. It was powerful, very accurate. We shot at 300 metres down to 100 metres, and 25 metres down to 10 metres with the pistol. I think the SMG might have been 25 to 50 metres."

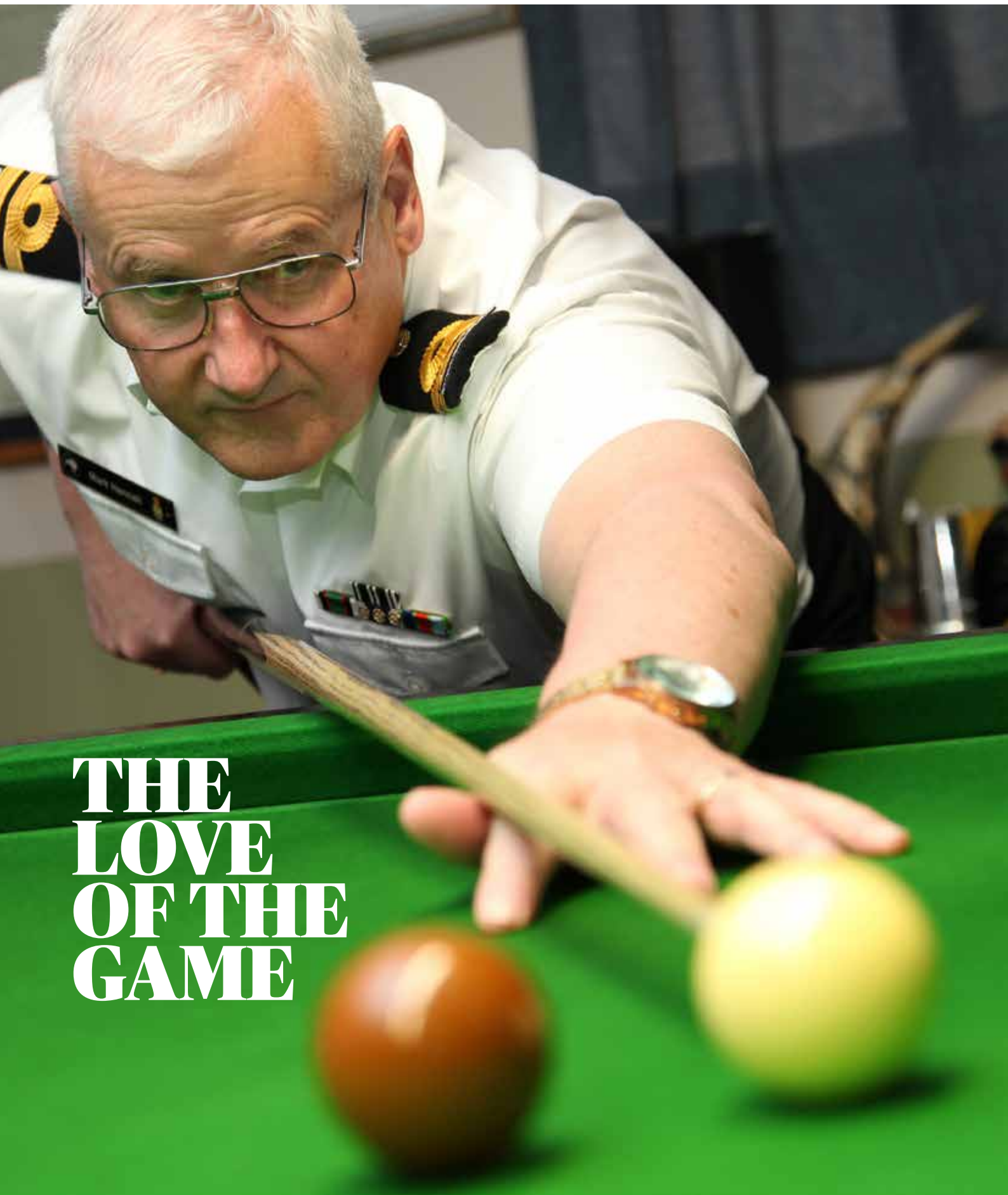
Back then it wasn't just gunners. "It was all across the board, all trades. It was a big deal and pretty fiercely contested, pretty intense and quite prestigious."

He believes it stopped due to cost-cutting. "I was devastated when they stopped it and I'm definitely pleased to hear it's back."









# THE LOVE OF THE GAME



## Lieutenant Mark Hannah's reconnection with his family's snooker legacy has resulted in a national title this year.

The win was in October and Lieutenant Mark Hannah is buzzing. "You can tell I'm still buzzing," he says.

LT Hannah prevailed in a hotly-contested national competition at Otaki RSA, taking a 3-1 semi-final victory over New Zealand Number 2 Rob Redgrove of Christchurch – a strong defeat considering Redgrove was running hot after winning the South Island and NZ Open championships in the last two months.

LT Hannah went on to defeat ex-English professional Neil Cameron, based out of Palmerston North, in a tight 3-2 victory to take the title for the first time in his amateur career.

The win is not only celebratory in its own right but caps a resurrection of sorts for LT Hannah. The legacy is enormous – his surname is synonymous with snooker in New Zealand, dating back to the mid-1940s in Otaki when the great Walter Lindrum, world billiards champion, came to town to give a demonstration match. The story goes that he spotted a pair of eyes underneath the bench seating and asked the 14-year-old boy to come out. That lad was LT Hannah's father, Robbie Hannah, and when Lindrum asked him to play, the boy scored a 40-plus break.

Robbie Hannah stayed amateur, going on to become a motor mechanic. LT Hannah remembers his father coming home in a big V8, full of prizes from winning the NZ RSA Snooker Championships in 1984. "I thought, wow, you can win something in this sport."

Snooker and billiards has always been in the blood, says LT Hannah. "We've got a billiard table that has been in the family since the 1960s. We'd have Sunday sessions with locals. Anyone in the family can pick up a cue."

He seriously got the bug for the sport at 18, when his father took him to Palmerston North for a tournament. "I had never played anyone outside of family, and I realised I had a competitive streak. I didn't like to

lose. I went home and I practised and practised." LT Hannah would win games, but would lose as well. He struggled with consistency, something that had bugged him throughout his younger years.

LT Hannah followed his brothers Dean and Wayne into the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1985. A communicator, he rose to Warrant Officer and commissioned from the ranks two years ago.

He's been to four world snooker championships, reaching the last 32 in a competition in Latvia in 2013. He says the discipline he acquired in the Navy helped his focus. "A Navy Physical Training Instructor helped me with mental preparation. He said, no matter what sport you play, you need to get the top two inches of your head right, if you want to make it to the next level."

It's something you need when all you can do is watch your opponent sink ball after ball. "Snooker is such a unique sport. It's only you and your head. You have no control over the other player, and you get that sinking feeling when all you can do is watch. Golf is very similar."

Over time LT Hannah moved into the administration side of the sport. He's a former president of the Wellington Billiards and Snooker Association, and then President of the national body.

But he didn't have the love for the game any more. "It was the pressure of trying to keep the sport going as president, through a time like COVID. No-one was around, nothing was happening and I asked myself, what is the thing I'm doing that isn't paying me. I dropped the admin, and then discovered how much better I can do just as a player, without worrying about the organisation."

He and his son got back into competing in the Robbie Hannah Memorial Tournament, named for his father who died in 2019. The pair won it. Next came a win in Waipukurau, then the Wellington Championships, and a top eight finish in the New Zealand Championships, plus a win in a Palmerston North invitational. The love was back.

As well as his son, LT Hannah – who lives in Porirua – is paying it forward in mentoring local snooker player Cody Turner. Turner is the 2022 winner of the Walter Lindrum 'Living Legends' grant, set up by Walter Lindrum's family to grow cue sports in Australia (and New Zealand).

He says people have forgotten that snooker and billiards were a mainstay of RSA clubs in New Zealand. "I think people have forgotten why the RSA existed. Clubs need to remember that they were formed after the war, for somewhere to go and do something different, and that included playing some sport and having fun. But they get rid of the tables because they think they aren't being used. That's why we keep tournaments running in clubs."

He's been involved with the Otaki RSA for 40 years and cue sports is growing there, he says. "It's the same challenge for any sport. We run a junior coaching programme, and people bring their kids in, to introduce them to the game."

There's a very large and well-fitted caravan sitting on his driveway and he's itching to go places with it. Next year he's taking some leave and his wife are going to hit the road for six months, following the snooker tournaments around New Zealand. "You get a small window in your life, and you could miss it. We've decided to take it, travel to tournaments, play on the weekend, and maybe pick up some prize money." He even attended a NZDF financial seminar at Trentham to scope out whether it was feasible.

He's not closing the door on Navy. "Career management have been really supportive, and when I was in recruiting, that was all about being on the road. If COVID has taught us anything, it's taught us about working out of office."

His latest national win this year means he qualifies for the World Snooker Federation Qualifiers in Sydney in February. "Unfortunately I won't be available to attend this time around however just knowing I can still compete at this level is amazing. Let's see what 2024 has in store."

# RSA SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

**All we want for  
Christmas is to be here  
when you need us.**

As we head into the festive season, we know that a lot of families will be worried about making ends meet. That on top of the everyday stresses, the additional expectations of the holiday season can seem overwhelming and push some to breaking point.

When you're thinking of where to turn for help, we know that the RSA might not be near the top of your list... but we should be.

Forget what you know about us, and take another look at the support the RSA can offer you and your whānau.

We've worked hard over recent years to move our organisation back to its roots. To return our focus to what is truly important, supporting New Zealand's veterans of military service and their whānau.

We've made it easier for you to access that support: We have over 250 support advisors right across the country, trained and ready to help. We've also been rolling out RSA support hubs in NZDF camps and bases around the country including Devonport Naval Base. If you can't get to the hub, you can still contact one of our District Support Managers for support.

The kinds of support we provide to serving NZDF personnel could be anything from providing immediate hardship alleviation to families in need right through to making repairs on houses, or funding after-school care to provide respite to a military parent undergoing medical treatment.

Alongside our traditional support function, our new Veterans' Employment Service is helping a number of serving personnel transition out of the military. Our Employment Advisors can help by providing expert advice and connecting those looking for work with employers who understand the value of their military service.

We also provide support to whānau. We know that the families of our military personnel experience many different hardships; from long absences, frequent relocations, even disruption to family routines caused by short notice deployments. The support they provide to our serving personnel is incomparable and we want to make sure they are looked after too.

If you're out travelling this summer, we encourage you to call in to one of our hospitality-based RSA's. There are venues around the country that can provide food and fellowship as you travel—and as a member of the NZDF, you are welcome into any RSA, just show your NZDF ID card at the door.

Wherever you find yourself this holiday period, if you or your whānau need support—please get in touch.



## RSA SUPPORT HUB DEVONPORT

Gail Kennett – 021 446 011

## DISTRICT SUPPORT MANAGERS

Northland: Charlie Lamb  
– 027 421 0990

Auckland: Tony Miller  
– 027 425 1574

Waikato/King Country/Bay of Plenty: Tricia Hague  
– 027 388 6243

Wairarapa/Hawkes' Bay/East Coast: Janet Castell – 027 239 1008

Central/Wellington: Danny Nelson  
– 027 202 3931

Nelson/Marlborough/Westland: Rob Todman – 021 256 2180

Canterbury: Jo Frew  
– 021 208 4622

Otago/Southland: Niall Shepherd  
– 027 600 3104

Australia: Valerie Church  
– +61 416 755 125

## VETERAN EMPLOYMENT ADVISORS

Northland, Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Waikato (less Taupo): Tony Wright – 021 0274 6777

Taupo, Taranaki, Gisborne, Manawatu, Hawke's Bay: Dave Benfell – 021 725 481

Wairarapa, Wellington: Michelle Tebbutt – 021 193 6261

South Island: Sam Platt – 021 0910 8669



# CHASING THE OLYMPIC DREAM

SPORTS

Able Combat Systems Specialist  
**DEANNE READ**

In terms of boxing in the women's middleweight division, Deanne Read knows she's hands-down the best in New Zealand and a contender for Olympic Games selection. But she wanted to know how she stacks up internationally.

Very well, as it turns out. Able Seaman Combat Specialist Read claimed silver at the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands last month. She dominated her semi-final, knocking down her Samoan opponent twice in the opening round, but then lost a points decision to Australia's Caitlin Parker in the gold medal bout.

It's been a very strategic buildup to this moment. In October she entered the National Golden Gloves tournament, winning both her fights and being named Most Scientific Female Boxer of the tournament. That was on the back of a multi-national training camp for three weeks in September, basing herself at the USA Olympic Training Centre in Florida, USA.

"It was just what I needed," says ACSS Read. "It's the best in the world for training, and America is always up there. Quite a few competitors I met had already qualified, and some were going to the Olympics for their second time."

The training built up from light sparring to test matches – full-on fights. She fought the No. 1 USA competitor twice, as well as the No. 1 in the division below.

"These are top-calibre athletes and I felt like I was right up there with them. This gave me a huge amount of confidence going into our Olympic qualifier, knowing how well I stacked up against the best in the world."

ACSS Read, who joined the Navy in 2018, says the Navy has been hugely supportive in her sporting goals.

"I've always aspired to be an Olympian. I was boxing for nine years before I had children, and then the sport was more about having space to get away from being a mum, not really about competing. My kids are two and four and suddenly it was like having children became my superpower. I came back into training and I decided I'm only coming back for the Olympic Games, nothing more, nothing less. After a month my coach realised I was serious."

She wasn't on Boxing New Zealand's radar but selectors noticed her performance at the New Zealand Nationals earlier in the year. "I've come out of nowhere. From that point on I've been fighting more, and fundraising." It cost around \$7,000 to go to the States, but she wanted to see how she stacked up. "It was a lot of money, and time away from family, but I came back feeling like I could back myself. I felt like an Olympian."

# Sports Awards 2023

## New Zealand Defence Force Sports Awards 2023 Navy Winners

### NZDF Individual Sportsperson of the Year

Leading Physical Training Instructor Jack Church won gold at the 2023 Invictus Games in Dusseldorf, Germany, in the Open Grade Track event, 100m sprints, less than two years after experiencing extreme adversity—a heart transplant. LPTI Church had to learn to walk again and his training regime was important in his recovery journey.

### NZDF Emerging Sports Person of the Year

Sub Lieutenant Anneke Arlidge achieved exceptional running performance in the past year. She beat the Navy cross-country course record by seven minutes and topped her 'age-group' beep test score record, all while being selected in the RNZN Women's Football team to play against the Māori Football Aotearoa.

### NZDF Sports team of the Year

The NZDF Women's Hockey team played their Australian Defence Force counterparts in three matches. The first two were a draw and the third was won by NZDF. The team is stacked with Navy, including POET Tamara Dudley (Coach), POWTR Kayla Mitchell (Manager), POMED Alex Carter, ADR Petra Dye-Hutchinson, ACH Nadia Mwila, POCSS Samantha-Joan Scothern and ENS Charlotte Thomas.

## RNZN ARTIFICER APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION REUNION LUNCHEON 2024

The Biannual Luncheon is being held at the RNZN Ngataringa Bay Sports Complex, Ngataringa Bay, Devonport, Auckland. Saturday 25 May 2024 from 1030 to 1500.

All those who joined the RNZN as an Artificer Apprentice are cordially invited to the Luncheon.

Wives, Partners and Widows of Ex Artificer Apprentices are most welcome to attend. We also extend an invitation to those who joined the RN as an Artificer Apprentice.

For registration forms please contact:

**Andy Francis**  
andy.francis@xtra.co.nz  
0274 740 050

## PROMOTIONS:

### *Congratulations on your promotion*

13 October – 10 November

POET Lele AIAVAO

LTCDR Nathan ATKINSON

LMT(L) Myer AUGUST

LT Jayden BARTRAM

LLSS Sam DE BUEGER

AMA Kjersti FARAIMO

AWT Ryan FROST

AWT Kevin GIANG

LTCDR Luke GODSELL

CPOYDS Andy HALL

LTCDR Simon HALL

AWT Jimmy HARRIS

LT Matt HUDSON

CPOHST Ryan HULSE

AMT(P) Anahera HUNTER

LT Christian LLOYD

LTCDR Stephanie LUITEN

LTCDR Juliet MACLEAN

AWT Angus MCMAHON

AET Jacques MEECH

LT Te Purihi MOANA

AMA Kaira OCAMPO

AMA Holly SHAW

AMA Matthew SHORE

POET Hayden SKIPWORTH

ACWS Stacie SMITH

LMT(P) Caleb STEVENS

CAPT Wilson TRUMPER

LWTR Tiahuia TUREI

AET Benjamin VAN DER SPUI

LLSS Steven WERETA

AWTR Amenique WESTERLUND

LT Tim WHITEKER-HOBSON

LMUS Natalie WILLIAMS



# 15 ROUNDS

## LIEUTENANT COMMANDER BRETT FITZGERALD



01

### Job Title and description:

I'm the Public Affairs Officer (Navy) for Defence Public Affairs. You're likely to see me out and about taking notes, chasing stories and wielding a camera!

02

### Date Joined RNZN:

17 July 2011.

03

### First ship posted to:

HMNZS OTAGO.

04

### Best deployment and why:

Posting to the Korean DMZ in 17/18. I was really lucky to be there when North Korea participated in the Winter Olympics being hosted in the South which presented a lot of unique opportunities. I was also grateful to return to South Korea as I lived there before joining the Navy and my wife found a civilian job/house near base so everything really lined up.

05

### Hometown:

Mosgiel.

06

### High School:

Taieri College.

07

### Favourite book:

*Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card.

08

### Favourite movie:

*Train to Busan.*

09

### Favourite album:

Any Vampire Weekend album, can't pick a clear favourite.

10

### Favourite song:

*The Vengabus* by the Vengaboys (Huge hit back in 1998 and I love that I still hear it being played by the younger sailors at PT and in the sheds before or after sports games!)

11

### Favourite holiday destination:

Anywhere new or out of the ordinary. Most memorable so far would be backpacking around South America.

12

### Outside of work, what's the one thing you enjoy doing?

I like variety and trying new things, currently enjoying my first season playing Aussie Rules Football/AFL with the mighty the Waitakere Magpies! Also spending time with family and friends.

13

### What's something about you that not many people know?

Before joining the Navy I was a passenger on two different ships that were evacuated whilst sinking, A ferry in Japan that hit a whale and a leaky tourist boat in Vietnam. The ferry was salvaged, repaired and is still operating, the other one is not.

14

### A person that taught you a valuable life/Navy lesson... and the lesson was?

"Don't let a win get to your head or a loss to your heart" – Public Enemy.

15

### How would you describe the Navy in 10 words or less?

Everyone's words are different can't wait to hear/share yours...



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