

# THE BUGLE

ISSUE 337  
JANUARY 2026

## THIS ISSUE

New Year Honours  
Stories  
Looking Back in 2025  
Messages

The Deployment Newsletter is  
produced for families and service  
personnel associated with current  
overseas deployments



## THE BUGLE

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### Deadline

The deadline for Edition 338 (**February**) is **26 January 2026**

Bugle contributions are welcome and should be sent to the Community Inbox: [community.deployment@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:community.deployment@nzdf.mil.nz).

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Contributions are co-ordinated by your Deployment Services Officers

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### Disclaimer

Articles and opinions expressed in The Bugle are not necessarily those of the New Zealand Defence Force.

### Cover Photo:

Christmas in Bahrain with the team

# NEW YEAR HONOURS

## Naval officer decorated for leadership of response to sinking of HMNZS Manawanui

Commodore Andrew Brown RNZN (Retd) has been awarded the Distinguished Service Decoration (DSD) in the New Year Honours List 2026 for his leadership of New Zealand's response to the grounding and subsequent sinking of HMNZS Manawanui on the south coast of Upolu, Samoa in October 2024.

The Naval dive and hydrographic vessel ran aground with 75 people on board while surveying a reef on Saturday 5 October 2024, and sank the next day. Everyone aboard the ship made their way safely to shore, some rescued by locals and other craft in the area.

Including a five-month period in Samoa, Commodore Brown was the strategic interface between New Zealand authorities, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), Samoan authorities and the various stakeholders involved in the response, which addressed the initial impact assessment, environmental protection, salvage operations, diplomacy, and strategic implications of the sinking.

The citation states that he recognised that the support of the Samoan Government and community was critical in the management of the sinking.

"He facilitated the Samoan-led response with an inclusive approach, engaging with leaders and providing constant progress feedback to Samoan authorities. This resulted in a high degree of trust being placed in New Zealand's response, in a situation where the local community were concerned about the threat to their environment and livelihoods.

"He was Strategic Contract Manager for the NZDF's oversight of salvage operations, had oversight of the deployed NZDF Task Group, and was a key advisor to the Maritime Pollution Advisory Committee that managed the Samoan national response. Commodore Brown's leadership and diplomacy within the [Samoa] Maritime Pollution Advisory Committee and support to the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa, with development and deployment of a water testing capability, positively influenced the decision to remove the precautionary zone and permit the community to return to fishing in the vicinity" the citation says.

Commodore Brown said that he is honoured and humbled to be recognised for his contribution to the response.

"But I must acknowledge the personnel from the New Zealand Defence Force, other government agencies, civilian contractors, and Samoan Government officials that worked alongside me and supported me during the response.

"It was a very challenging and technical operation and there were not many days that I did not call upon my previous years of experience, training, and leadership, so I have many to thank and acknowledge," he said.





## New Zealand's Chief of Defence Force observes Search and Rescue near Tokelau, and Pacific patrol near Cook Islands



for this successful search and rescue of the fisherman,” he said. “The NZDF plays a key part in maritime domain awareness throughout the Realm of New Zealand, and the wider Pacific. It is exactly what these capable aircraft are built to do and we are proud to do our part in assisting our Pacific neighbours.” Air Marshal Davies used his time in the Cook Islands to also conduct a range of engagements, including meetings with various Government officials. He also laid a wreath at the Nikao Cemetery in Rarotonga where many military personnel are buried.

“Our Defence relationship with the Cook Islands is strong and it’s an important one for the NZDF. Our regular patrols in this region ensure we uphold New Zealand’s ongoing commitment to the security and defence of the Realm countries.” Air Marshal Davies’ visit comes on the back of Exercise Tropic Twilight, a highly successful annual humanitarian assistance and disaster relief series of activities, which this year was held on the small island of Mau’ke in the Cook Islands in September and October. The exercise involved personnel from New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu repairing and enhancing vital infrastructure such as the water bores and the solar farm, as well as carrying out improvement works at the local school. “It’s been really pleasing to hear how much the communities of Mau’ke valued our contribution,” Air Marshal Davies said.

A Pacific patrol by a P-8A Poseidon aircraft, that was aimed at providing maritime domain awareness of threats posed by illegal fishing, responded to an emergency yesterday, successfully completing a search and rescue operation for a missing fisherman.

The aircraft was deployed to the Cook Islands when the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) was requested by Maritime New Zealand’s Rescue Coordination Centre NZ (RCCNZ) to conduct a search for a man in an aluminium dinghy who was reported overdue from a fishing trip after departing Atafu atoll, Tokelau on 17 December. RCCNZ provided a detailed search area with the dinghy expected to be drifting south from Atafu.

The crew located the man on board the dinghy and remained overhead until the vessel Fetu o te Moana was able to reach the survivor.

Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal Tony Davies was on board the aircraft when the crew conducted the search and rescue mission. He was on the P-8A to observe maritime domain awareness patrols in the region, and visit the Cook Islands. He said he has been impressed by the detection capabilities of the aircraft, and the information able to be provided about vessels operating in the area. “It was great to watch our highly experienced crew demonstrate the capabilities used during patrols to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the region and



# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

*News from  
Sinai*

*Articles and opinions from Foreign Correspondents are  
not necessarily those of the NZDF*

## A Driver's Life in Sinai

LCPL H

Since touching down in theatre, NZCON has barely had a moment to idle. The tempo picked up immediately and hasn't slowed since. One of the standout events so far has been the Norwegian Foot March, a 30km test kicking off at 1900 with a 4.5-hour cut-off. It was a massive effort across the camp, with soldiers from many nations stepping up to the challenge. Watching so many different uniforms pushing through the dark and supporting one another kilometre after kilometre was something special. It reminded us just how unique this mission is. Dozens of nations are tied together in the desert, all working towards the same goal.

For the Driver Section, the most significant task to date was a trailer exchange across the border. Over three days, we moved from South Camp to North Camp, crossed the border, then returned south. Each day began at 0500 and ran late into the night. Long hours, tight coordination, and unfamiliar environments; yet the



**LCpl H during the Norwegian Foot March**

team handled it like professionals. It truly highlighted what a strong driver team can achieve when everyone is switched on and backing one another.

Life in the desert has delivered no shortage of entertainment. Between weekend outings and the Tuesday pizza nights hosted by each contingent, there's always something to look forward to. Every pizza night brings its

own style, music, and merchandise, making it the perfect opportunity to meet soldiers from around the world. It's also where we all nod along confidently to languages we absolutely do not understand, which somehow makes the conversations even better.

NZCON continues to proudly represent Kiwi culture within the MFO. Whether it's performing Haka and Waiata during ceremonies or simply the way our people carry themselves day-to-day, the reputation built by previous contingents is clearly alive and well. The respect shown to us by other nations is something we don't take lightly, and the Driver Section takes pride in upholding that standard every day.

Being over here can also come with challenges, but the support from home makes all the difference. I want to acknowledge my partner, Grace, along with all the families and loved ones of NZCON 25/02 back in New Zealand. Your support keeps our soldiers motivated, grounded, and able to do what we do. We couldn't carry out this mission without you.

Ngā mihi nui from the desert,



**The Driving Section during their border Crossing**



**ANZAC participants in the Norwegian Foot March**

## Christmas In Sinai

**CAPT K**

The contingent enjoyed some much needed and well-deserved time to call home, relax, and enjoy the Sinai sun on Christmas Day.

While other nations were confused about a hot and sunny Christmas, despite technically being winter over here, the Kiwis enjoyed some weather that felt a little bit like home.

We opened our doors that morning to discover Santa had visited during the night, delivering draw-string stockings filled with treats—and novelty socks, which much of the contingent donned for the day's activities.

We started the day together as a contingent, unwrapping Secret Santa gifts of great variety. There was clothing, chocolate, soft drinks, and of course a few joke gifts in the mix too. We also appreciated the gift boxes from the RSA, which held NZ snacks as well as handmade cards from school children around the country. It was a great way to start the day before we all dispersed to enjoy the day as we wished.

The dining facility hosted a delicious Christmas lunch, and there was the obligatory screening of the classic Christmas film, *Die Hard*. Despite missing home, the Christmas

spirit and camaraderie of the contingent made the day both memorable and enjoyable.

Wishing our families, friends, and loved ones back home a very merry Christmas and a happy new year, and we're looking forward to seeing you all again soon.

Mā te wā,



**NZCON with our RSA boxes in front of the Woolshed Patio**

# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

*News from  
Bahrain*

*Articles and opinions from Foreign Correspondents are  
not necessarily those of the NZDF*

## Christmas Fun in Bahrain

**WGCDR B**

I can hardly believe I'm halfway through my deployment – so much has happened, and yet it seems like I've only just scratched the surface of Bahrain and my role here at the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Headquarters.

Rather than rattle on about my role – I'll tell you a little about what the team and I have been up to outside of working hours and over the Christmas period. While family and friends were busy keeping the home front sorted, putting up Xmas trees, preparing huge feasts and generally doing all those things we'd normally help with so that we can focus on doing (mostly) military stuff, here's what we were also doing...

I arrived in Bahrain late summer and have never experienced heat and humidity on this scale before. Although the thermometer said 43 degrees, the humidity made it feel like 50 degrees. I ignored a piece of sage advice from my outgoing counterpart (don't go for a walk after 0700 hrs, you'll die) - and went for a walk at 1000 hrs thinking "it can't be too hot surely". Not only did I feel like I was going to die.... the glue in my running shoes melted which was a waste of a good pair of runners.

After a quick 'hand-over photo shoot' and two weeks supervision, I was on my own. I soon learned that road rules in Bahrain are 'advisory only' to say the least, my Arabic could do with a little polish, and I have a penchant for befriending stray Bahraini cats. The first month was an absolute blur of trying to decipher the different ranks/flags/uniforms of the 47 nations which make up the members of CMF.

Our small Op PUKEKO team started with five and has now grown to seven. We are truly a 'Joint Force' and are a mixture of Army, Air Force and Navy. Although we are accommodated together as a team, each of us work under a differing Command structure in our day job, and some even work for different Task Forces within the CMF. This aside – we regularly catch up and often arrange activities out of hours, so we maintain that Kiwi connection. We've managed to visit the Souq, National Museum, Bahrain Fort, Tree of Life and fight against a Zombie Apocalypse (virtual reality you'll be relieved to know.... we won as well.... I think!). We were also lucky enough to feast at the Thanksgiving dinner held at the US Galley on Base at NSA2. Wow – just wow!



*Stray Bahraini Cats*

On the work front – I've been lucky enough to attend a few National Day commemorations and lay wreaths to honour the Service of our veterans. The Americans do love a giant cake it seems and this has caught on with other nations as they celebrate their National Day. I feel like such a tourist, but I haven't been able to stop taking photos of the mammoth cakes!

We were lucky enough to receive Christmas gift boxes from the RSA via



*Handover Photo Shoot*



*Thanksgiving Dinner*

# News from Bahrain

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**National Day Commemorations wreath laying**



**One of the mammoth Cakes (National Day)**

our Welfare Facilitation Team (thanks Nicky Ruki and team which went down a treat. We had a Secret Santa evening with fellow Australian and UK deployed teammates and many laughs reading out the letters and cards included in our packages which were lovingly written by Kiwi school kids from around the country. One letter even had a Morse coded message which we gave to one of the (older) team members to decipher.

Although nothing can replace being at home with loved ones, friends and family – a few of us managed to reduce our levels of homesickness by indulging in yet another delish meal at the US Galley and rolled ourselves into our cars after eating too much.

With the New Year just around the corner I think I'd better add 'more exercise' to my Resolutions List and avoid any more giant cakes. Before I sign off – I'd like to personally thank my two kids, my partner and my family and friends for supporting me so much while I'm away.

With your support I've been able to focus on what I need to do while deployed and I can't thank you enough. As for the family and friends of our small team up here – I extend the same thanks.

Shout out to our work colleagues and Joint Forces for all you do too. We hope you all had a fab Xmas and we'll see you all soon. Stay safe. (



**Opening of RSA Christmas Boxes**



**The Pink Christmas Tree**



**Contents of RSA Boxes**

# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

*News from  
Middle East*

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## TE TAUA TOKOKANGA KI TE RAWHITI KEEPERS OF THE EASTERN GATEWAY

This wasn't just another mission, it requires absolute coordination of the Army and Airforce. Being on OP Troy means working alongside personnel from other services and other contingents, each bringing their own skills and strengths. Our Airforce team – SNO, W/O, OPSO, AIR MOVOP and our Medic. The Army contingent, ISOP, LOGSPEC and INTOP slot it perfectly and we have become like a small family.

### My Role

My role ensures seamless logistic support and readiness for all ongoing and emerging mission requirements. Providing supply support to all missions across the wider Middle East Region (MER). My responsibilities include ensuring that forward-deployed missions have the necessary equipment, rations and stores to operate effectively throughout the Middle East Region. I am responsible for the day-day management of all stocks and warehouse operations, including stocktakes, processing demands, checking equipment and stores for serviceability and readiness.

### My time

By the end of December, it will have been nearly three months since I first

set foot on the golden desert of Dubai. It feels like I just arrived yesterday, time really does fly here!

I still remember my first day stepping out of the airport's air-conditioned terminal and being hit by the heat immediately. I have been to some hot weather countries, but Dubai tops it off. I glanced at the vehicle's temperature display at 36 degrees. I honestly thought the gauge must be broken. How anyone survives and works in this heat was beyond me at the time. I arrived at Kiwi Lines and was introduced to the team, and from there it was straight into work on the same day. That's when it really sank in that this was a proper operation, and no time was being wasted. Two weeks later, HOTO was complete, and it was time for me to find my feet and establish my own routine on the ground.

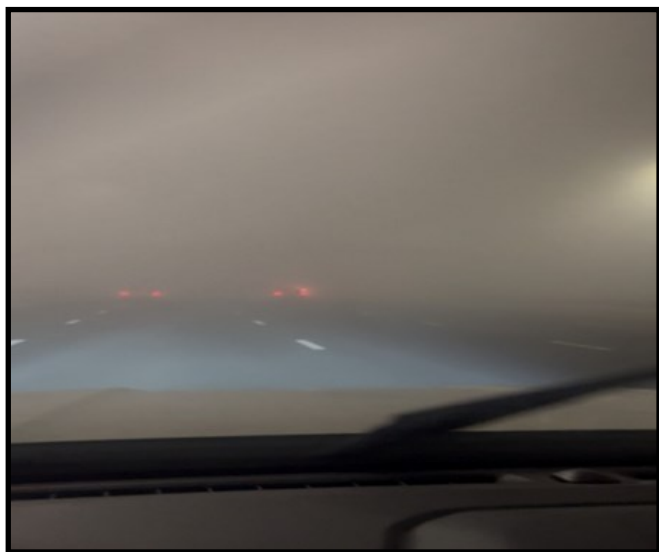
November proved to be a demanding month. Between Makipai Flights, FARAD rotations, visitors, and the constant movement of the engineering teams in and out through Troy, the pace rarely slowed. The Troy team, led by the "Silverback" SNO, rose to every challenge and got the job done.

I was lucky enough to be invited by the

Aussies to go watch the Dubai sevens. It turned out to be one of the highlights of my tour, as I got to witness the kiwis absolutely thrash the Aussies in both the men's and women's competitions. While the results could've gone either way, the kiwis were simply too strong and came away with the victories in the end.

It was a great outcome for me, if the Kiwis had lost, it would have been a very quiet ride home with the Aussies. Instead, the banter on the way back was top notch, full of laughs and memories to keep.

Outside of work, I make sure to stay active with sports and exercise. Every afternoon in Troy, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm a variety of sports are organised by the British and Aussies including volleyball, football, touch rugby and pickleball. Sport brings people together regardless of background, culture or experience. Whether it's casual game or a competitive match but mostly builds resilience. Sharing the same camp with the Brits and Aussies adds an extra spark to every game; the friendly rivalry makes every match more competitive, more fun, and infinitely more rewarding. Now that the rotations have moved on, we're finally catching up on our own



**5:30 a.m. airport pickup. My first time driving in Dubai fog hazard lights on, hoping for the best, and praying no one rear-ends me. Driving here can be ruthless.**

## News from Middle East

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**New Zealand winners Dubai Sevens**

tasks. Even so, there's still plenty of work ahead both on the flight line and within Kiwi Lines. The tempo has eased slightly, but the mission continues.

### Challenges

As my first operational role and first time working with different services,

stepping into this role pushed me out of my comfort zone yet rewarding learning curve that help me grow significantly. Coming from the Army we operate at a differently pace, with supply chain priorities and expectations. The cultural differences also can lead into cultural misunderstanding about expectations

and roles. However having great leaders that understand this really helps me to adjust my expectations and communication style which helps the team work together smoothly despite different services and cultures.

As new challenges arise, the mighty team of Troy will always rise to the occasion, carrying the ethos and values of Ngati Tumatauenga. It is always an honour to serve and protect our beloved country, New Zealand Aotearoa – Land of the long White Cloud.

As Christmas rises on the horizon, may we carry this same spirit forward, the warmth, the generosity, the unity, the laughter. Let's continue to share the cheer, the light, and the season's magic as we move together toward the end of this year.

**Merry Xmas from the Guardians of the Eastern Gateway.**

**'Ofa ke mou ma'u ha kilisimasi lelei moe ta'u lelei monuia.**



**Room ready for Christmas**

# ADDITIONAL PHOTOS



# DSO'S CORNER



**Nicky Ruki**

Deployment Services Officer

That said, by the time everyone else is back, I'll be well into the swing of things! It will be a good opportunity to catch up, tidy up, and start making plans for the year ahead—and it already looks like 2026 has plenty in store for us all.

Family dinners will most likely continue in February. Unfortunately, the last couple we tried to organise weren't particularly well attended, so we may need to think a little outside the box. Is this something families still want to see continue? Is a Sunday dinner too much of a commitment? Would a mid-week or lunchtime option work better? If you have any suggestions, please pass them on. I truly believe these gatherings are valuable for connection, but they may not suit everyone in their current format.

We will continue to share information and articles with families through the Bugles. The final Bugle for 2025 included some wonderful contributions from both home and abroad, and we've received great feedback on that issue. We also hope our deployed service personnel enjoyed their little treats from home and reading the cards from Operation Christmas Card. If anyone would like to share a story, please let me know—we'd love to pass these on to the schools and organisations that took part.

A big thank you to those deployments who sent letters back to participating schools. I dropped a letter off to Burnham Kindergarten before Christmas, and they were incredibly appreciative of the acknowledgement. Thank you for taking the time and effort to do this—it truly means a lot.

As we move into another busy year with so much to achieve, the one constant remains the commitment of our service personnel to deploy with pride for their nation and to make a difference in the lives of others. None of this would be possible without the commitment and support of families—you too make an incredible difference.

Best wishes for a great year ahead for 2026

**S** eason's greetings to you all. I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and New Year, and that you enjoyed the holidays, changes in routine, and a bit of time away. Sadly, the time always seems to pass far too quickly, and normality returns sooner than we might like!

We had a very quiet Christmas this year. Three of our children were home in the morning to open presents, then two headed off to their partners' families for lunch. Later, everyone returned for dinner, including my three-year-old grandson and our new baby granddaughter. It was so nice having everyone under one roof for the night—playing games, laughing, and just enjoying being together.

Normally we stick with a traditional Christmas lunch of turkey, ham, new potatoes, peas, and gravy, followed by pavlova, trifle, and fruit salad. However, with people coming and going throughout the day, we opted for a BBQ dinner instead—which was actually a great choice, especially as it meant no leftovers for the following week! Unfortunately, the weather wasn't fantastic, so we didn't get out as much as planned, but we did manage to tick off a few jobs around the house. Hopefully, over the next few weekends,

we can get out and enjoy some family trips.

For us, this is what Christmas is really about—catching up with friends and family and enjoying the moments together. During this time, my thoughts often turned to those separated from loved ones over the festive season due to deployment. I hope you were able to be surrounded by others and that connection—whether in person or through phone and video calls—helped fill the gap. I've heard some lovely snippets of news from our deployment locations too, including carol singing, Secret Santa exchanges, great food, and plenty of fun shared by many.

I really enjoyed the conversations and emails I had with several of you before Christmas. One family was looking forward to travelling to see extended family, others planned to celebrate Christmas once their loved one returns, and some had already marked the occasion before deployment. A few of you also shared exciting plans for overseas travel once deployment ends. I've also heard many stories of families doing an incredible job at home, managing day-to-day challenges while their loved ones are away—please know you are doing an amazing job.

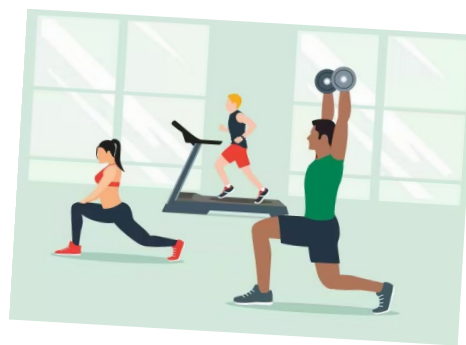
As I head back to the office, I'm not exactly looking forward to the early mornings and returning to old routines.

# Caring for Yourself

Deployments for those left at home are not always easy.  
Caring for yourself is crucial!

Try this check list:

- ✿ Remember that the better I care for myself, the better I will be able to meet my children's needs.
- ✿ Make sure I am getting enough rest.
- ✿ Make sure I maintain good nutrition.
- ✿ Make sure I am getting enough exercise.
- ✿ Join in NZDF family activities and briefings.
- ✿ Join a club, start a new hobby.
- ✿ Talk with others in like situations.
- ✿ Reach out to old and new friends and relatives.
- ✿ Try to find time for myself.
- ✿ Try to do something you have never done before. Cook a new recipe or learn a new sport.
- ✿ Learn ways I can become independent.
- ✿ Reward myself for doing a good job.
- ✿ Remind myself during stressful times that the situation is temporary.
- ✿ Seek help if needed. Contact the Deployment Services Officer, Psychologist or Chaplain.



# FOR YOUR INFO

## Staying Connected

How we communicate with you ...

In order for us to keep in contact with you, it is so important that we have your correct information.

So if you:

- ◆ Change address and/or your home phone number
- ◆ Update your cellphone and have a new number
- ◆ Change your email address

we would like to know so we can update our database.

If you think it might be possible that we don't have your email address or just want to check that the address we have is correct, please email either Nicky and we will check and update our records as necessary.

or [nicola.ruki2@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:nicola.ruki2@nzdf.mil.nz)  
or [community.deployment@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:community.deployment@nzdf.mil.nz)

We thank you.

## Deployment Guides

Deployment Guides are prepared for family members for each of the missions we support. While Guides are provided at Family Welfare Days, some family members who may not be able to attend will then rely on their deploying person to collect these on your behalf and pass them on. While we would like to think that this works, we are also aware that some of you may miss out.

If you do not have a copy of the Guide for the deployment your family member is on, please contact Nicky to have a copy popped in the mail to you. A full list of our contact details are on the inside front cover of this Bugle.

## Facebook Pages

Want to catch up on News from around the Defence Force. Join the facebook pages:

NZ Defence Force—(Lovely video Christmas messages from our deployed family members)

New Zealand Army

Royal New Zealand Navy

Royal New Zealand Airforce

## Deployment Support Services

Need information?  
Need support?  
Need a listening ear?  
Need to send an urgent message to a deployment location?

### Deployment Support Services are here for you

All personnel on deployment and their families have the support of the Deployment Services Officers (DSOs). In addition there is support from Unit Points of Contact (UPOC) and local Welfare Support Services. The nominated Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) of families of deployed NZDF personnel should, in the first instance, contact their DSO who can assist or facilitate the best pathway for welfare issues.

#### Deployment Services Officers:

**Burnham**—Nicky Ruki  
Ph: 0800 337 569 or 027 449 7565

**Linton**—VACANT  
Ph: 0800 683 77 327 or 021 649 903

Added to this, there are other very valuable support networks available in your local region.

For additional support and services:

#### Navy Family Support Services:

0800 NAVY HELP (0800 628 94 357) to connect with:

- Social Workers
- Navy Family Events
- Naval Welfare Liaison Manager.

#### Army:

##### Defence Community Facilitators:

**Linton:**  
Lesley Clutterbuck—Ph: 021 649 901

**Trentham :**  
Dee O'Connor—Ph: 021 905 157

**Burnham:**  
Ph: 021 245 5099

**Waiouru:**  
Sharlene Turua—021 226 9057

**Papakura:**  
Helena O'Neill—021 934 635  
Toni Piggott—021 229 8039

#### Air Force:

##### Defence Community Facilitators:

**Air Staff Wellington:**  
Linley Williams—Ph: 021 243 4108

**Base Auckland:**  
Vanessa Rowan —Ph: 027 450 2001

**Base Woodbourne:**  
Donna Wilson—Ph: 027 246 4910

**Base Ohakea:**  
Rebecca Smith—Ph: 021 351 542

#### Local Chaplaincy Services

#### Unit Point of Contact (UPOC)

# THE 10 MOST BROKEN NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS IN 2026

**Avoid breaking your goals, and stick to them instead!**

As the clock struck 12:01 on January 1, many of us resolved to make a change in our diet, exercise habits, or personal finances. Others among us are committed to improving our relationships, spending more time doing what we love, or learning something new. As last year becomes a more distant memory, let's take a look at how we may progress with these goals statistically speaking.



## 1. Lose Weight And/or Exercise More

No surprises here – this takes top place in nearly all studies out there, with 50-60 percent of people failing to keep up this resolution. It is also widely reported that most new January gym memberships are either forgotten by the end of the month or go totally unused.

## 2. Save Money

A US survey put this in second place, and we think the New Zealand results would be similar. Reportedly 49 percent of respondents promised to do this.



## 3. Eat Healthier

Year after year, these sorts of goals are placed in the top 10 for the most common and most broken resolution. The additional kilos we gain over the holiday season often pushes us to make this vow.



## 4. Break an Addiction

This includes quitting smoking or moderating alcohol intake. Quitting smoking has an even lower success rate than we may first think, reportedly only about 15% of people who try to quit achieve this for a six-month period.

Others are trying to break our digital addiction – sometimes called a “digital detox”. According to some studies, we each tap, swipe, and click on our phone 344 times every single day.

## 5. Learn Something New

In the wake of the global pandemic, virtual lessons and micro-courses became a lot more prevalent.

For years, this resolution has been one of the most popular ones that are also always broken due to lack of time.

## 6. Reduce Stress

Traveling with the kids over summer might not have been the best way to reduce stress, though be mindful that stress is a killer as it is often associated with a range of health impacts including serious diseases. It will do us well to have this on the list and stick to it like glue.

## 7. Sleep More

Sleep is also essential to overall health. Reputable sources show that one in three adults don't get enough of it.



## 8. Spend More Time With Family

Friends too. This also has great health benefits.

## 9. Travel to New Places

While this particular promise has gone on and off the top of New Year's resolution lists over the years, partly because of economic trouble impacting budgets and, of course, the recent global pandemic.

## 10. Volunteer

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge. Regardless of the motivation, most volunteers find it both challenging and rewarding.

### The Bottom Line: Broken Resolutions

So, what can we do to stop ourselves from failing at keeping these vows we might have made to ourselves?

- **Talk about it.** Share experiences and what we aim to achieve with supportive family and friends.
- **Practically prepare for a change.** Identify potential resistance to our progress and our game plan if we encounter those situations – if we're trying to eat better, we should remove our favourite salty or sweet snacks from the cupboard!
- **Be realistic.** Trying to do it all at once is a surefire recipe for failure. Take one achievable step at a time.
- **Set a timeframe.** A deadline can help keep us focused on what we want to attain.
- **Write it down.** A written document can also serve as a reminder to act whenever we're veering away from our target.
- **Technological help.** Trying to cut back on calories or carbs? Use online calories or carb calculators. Need to exercise more? Invest in a smartwatch



designed for fitness. Want to be more productive? Use task management apps. There's new technology coming online every day to help us on our way.

- **Chunk down.** Large goals can be broken into more manageable pieces.
- **No self-beating.** Perfection is unattainable. Remember that minor missteps when reaching our goals are completely normal and okay.
- **Get support.** Accepting help from those who care about us and will listen strengthens our resilience and ability to manage stress caused by our resolution. If we feel

overwhelmed or unable to meet our goals on our own, we can seek professional help. Psychologists may be able to assist – they are uniquely trained to understand the connection between the mind and body and can offer strategies as to how to adjust our goals so that they are attainable, as well as help us change unhealthy behaviors and address any underlying emotional issues.

- **Celebrate the wins.** Each resolution that is achieved – whether it be big or small – deserves to be celebrated. This doesn't have to be extravagant; it could be as simple as a picnic or going out to dinner. Recognising achievements helps us stay on the right path.



*The information contained in this publication is general in nature and is not intended to be financial advice that is specific to your personal circumstances. Before making any financial decisions, you should consult a professional financial adviser.*

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#### How to get hold of us

Please get in contact with us with any questions about your financial needs. Feel free to call us on **0508 BECOME (0508 232 663)** or email [hello@become.nz](mailto:hello@become.nz). There are no costs involved until an adviser has established your specific needs.

# VETERANS' AFFAIRS NEW ZEALAND

**V**  
31,000

eterans' Affairs represent and serve those who have fought in our country's best interests and who make sacrifices, even today, to ensure New Zealand remains a free and safe country. There are over

New Zealand veterans, with diverse backgrounds that range in age from 19 to more than a hundred years old. Their veterans include current NZ Defence Force personnel, those who have left the Defence Force and work in civilian roles, and retired ex-service personnel.

Veterans' Affairs are focused on providing excellent personal support for veterans and their families. They also partner with the broader NZ Defence Force and with other government and non-government agencies to facilitate their support.

Veterans' Affairs support those with Qualifying Service to be well at home, at work, and in their communities. The Veterans' Support Act 2014 defines what support can be provided to those with Qualifying Service and their families and whānau.

## Check your eligibility now

You may be eligible for support from Veterans' Affairs.

The easiest way to check is online at

**[www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/eligibility](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/eligibility)**

It only takes a few minutes to check.

We don't collect any information  
or check any HR records.



Or contact us at:

0800 483 8372 (Freephone NZ)

[veteransaffairs.mil.nz/contact-us](http://veteransaffairs.mil.nz/contact-us)

[veterans@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:veterans@nzdf.mil.nz)

And stay in touch with us at:

[veteransaffairs.mil.nz/newsletter](http://veteransaffairs.mil.nz/newsletter)

[facebook.com/NZVeteransAffairs](https://facebook.com/NZVeteransAffairs)

**[veteransaffairs.mil.nz/eligibility](http://veteransaffairs.mil.nz/eligibility)**

# CHILDREN AND DEPLOYMENTS

Source: *military.com*

All kids — no matter their age — want and need their parents to protect and care for them. And all parents want to be able to tell their kids that mommy and daddy will always be close by.

But when a parent leaves for military service, that comforting balance is disrupted. Some parents have to leave their families for long stretches of time. Some will be in harm's way. And despite the pride our men and women in the armed services feel in serving their country — and the knowledge that they are well trained to do so — military families can't help but worry how their kids will manage in a parent's absence.

How kids handle separation and what they need from the adults who care for them while a parent is away will vary somewhat. But all kids do react in some ways, and the adults around them need to be prepared. Parents can help smooth the transition before and after deployment, and foster the resiliency kids need to cope well in between.

## Before Deployment

There's no easy way to tell a child that a parent has to go away. Yet once a deployment date is set, it's important to give kids some advance notice, especially if a parent's deployment will involve big changes like a move or a new primary caregiver.

Here are some tips to consider:

- **Be honest.** The words you use are important and can mean different things depending on a child's age and maturity, so give kids the truth in terms they can understand. For example, for young children, the concept of a long separation is a lot harder to grasp than the fact that mommy won't be there to take them to school in the mornings or that daddy won't be back until after Christmas. They often do better with visual reminders, such as a calendar with dates checked off to mark the passage of time. Older kids, on the other hand, especially those who watch the news, may react with a greater sense of worry and fear. Reassure them that people in the military are trained to do their jobs and every effort will be made to ensure safety.
- **Let kids know that they will be taken care of.** Kids need to feel protected in a parent's absence, so tell them who will be taking care of them during the time away. Young children, especially, may have questions about their daily routine. Be patient and consistent if they ask the same questions over and over — repeated reassurances will help them feel more secure.
- **Make a plan to stay connected.** Let kids know that goodbyes are hard for everyone — even grown-ups. Remind them that they'll be thought of and loved while the parent is away, and talk about the people who will be there to help them feel better when they're feeling sad. Invite your child to come up with ideas to stay connected — from sending emails to promising to think about each other at the same time every day.
- **Try not to overburden.** Kids are very attuned to the feelings of their parents, so be aware of any tension and anxiety they might be picking up on at home. Also, avoid instructing your child to be the man or woman of the house while one parent is away. Kids need to be kids, even in tough times, so instead tell them to do the very best they can even though it might be hard.



# CHILDREN AND DEPLOYMENTS

- **Spend extra time together.** In the days and weeks prior to departure, many military parents feel pressure to get the house in order by tackling their overloaded to-do lists. Though fixing leaky faucets and taking the car for a tune-up are certainly important, remember that it's just as necessary to work in plenty of one-on-one time with each child. The photos, videos, and special mementos of these times are what your family will hold on to until everyone is together again.

## During Deployment

When a parent finally leaves, family life does change and it can take a little while for things to fall back into place. Kids are particularly vulnerable at this time, but parents and caregivers can help them through it.

Here are some ideas:

- **Keep a routine.** Help offset feelings of uncertainty by keeping life at home as predictable as possible. In the face of big changes, even small things that stay the same — like a simple bedtime routine or a fun Saturday morning ritual — can be extremely reassuring.
- **Keep the absent parent a part of children's lives.** Whether it's looking at pictures and videos, saying a special prayer, counting down days on a calendar, finding where mommy or daddy is on a map, making a scrapbook, or organizing an activity your loved one would like, encourage your kids to find creative ways to stay connected to the parent who's away.
- **Talk often and listen well.** Even the most attentive kids can misinterpret information, so ask your children what they've heard and then help them correct misconceptions and put things in perspective. Talk to them about the things that upset them and let them know it's OK to feel worried sometimes. Simply listening — and letting your kids know that you understand — is tremendously comforting. Encourage older kids to keep a journal to help work through their feelings.
- **Get support.** A parent's departure is not only unsettling for the kids, but also overwhelming for the partner who must absorb all the extra duties. The armed forces have many programs to help families get through the difficult times. Take advantage of them, as well as any offers of support from relatives, friends, or other military families who know what you're going through — especially if you're feeling depleted and are finding it hard to supply the positive interaction your kids need.

## Returning Home

When it's time for the homecoming — that joyous day you've all been waiting for — you expect the hugs, excitement, and happy tears. But the period of adjustment that often follows can catch many families by surprise. Though some returning servicemen and women do slip back easily into the rhythm of home life, most families need a little time to find their balance.



# CHILDREN AND DEPLOYMENTS

Here are some ideas for making the transition easier:

- **Communicate.** A lot can change when one partner has been away: not only are the kids older, perhaps with new interests and routines, but the remaining parent may also be more self-reliant. It's no wonder that many returning parents have a hard time figuring out where they fit into the plan. As with any transition, open, honest communication is key to re-establishing a routine that works for everyone.
- **Give it time.** Forget any expectations about how quickly things need to go back to "normal." Just because it takes your family some time to readjust doesn't mean you love each other any less or that you won't get back to where you were before — or even someplace better. Be patient as you get to know each other again, and give the whole family plenty of opportunities to rediscover each other.
- **Take the pressure off.** If the first few days and weeks of being together as a family aren't exactly the fairy tale you had in mind, try not to be discouraged. Putting pressure on yourself or your family to act or feel a certain way will only make things harder. Keep a sense of humor and let the process unfold naturally.

## Every Child Is Different

No two kids will react to a parent's deployment in exactly the same way. Even within the same family, some kids are naturally even-keeled and resilient, while others are much more sensitive. Some voice their concerns out loud; others worry in silence.

A child who's feeling anxiety may show it in a number of subtle ways. Babies and toddlers may become withdrawn or clingy. Preschoolers may regress in their behaviors or experience a resurfacing of old fears. Older kids and teens — even those who appear to take things in stride — may also have a tough time, experiencing decreased appetite, withdrawal from activities, sleep problems and nightmares, restlessness, stomachaches, aggression, anger, sadness, and difficulty at school.

If your child experiences any of these issues, avoid punishing, scolding, or shaming. Children may simply be making sure there is still someone ready to take care of them. Or they may be struggling with feelings they can't yet verbalize. Plenty of reassurance, consistency, and understanding — as well as calm but clear statements about what behaviors are out of bounds — can help get your child back on track.

Try not to take it personally if your child expresses anger toward either the absent or remaining parent. Though hard to hear, some temporary anger is normal when something happens that kids don't want and can't control. Help your kids express their strongest feelings in words (keeping a journal is a great way for older kids to do this), and continue to set limits on unacceptable ways to express anger. Tell them when you're feeling proud of their good behavior, bravery, kindness, helpfulness, and efforts.

Deployment is not an easy time for a family. Whether you're the parent who's away or the one at home, your kids will need your love and encouragement more than ever. Some days will be harder than others, but you can get through it — especially with the help of others.



**STARTING NOW!**



## Grateful Jar — 2025

Starting now, write good things that happen to you on little pieces of paper and then put them in a jar:

- ♥ Memories worth saving
- ♥ Accomplished goals
- ♥ The beauty of nature
- ♥ LOL moments
- ♥ Surprise gifts
- ♥ Daily blessings

On 31 December, open the jar and read all the amazing things that happened to you in 2026.

## New Year Resolutions

A New Year's resolution is a tradition in which a person resolves to change an undesired trait or behaviour to accomplish a personal goal or otherwise improve their life.

### Origins:

- \* Babylonians made promises to their gods at the start of each year that they would return borrowed objects and pay their debts.
- \* The Romans began each year by making promises to the god Janus, for whom the month of January is named.
- \* In the Medieval era, the knights took the "peacock vow" at the end of the Christmas season each year to re-affirm their commitment to chivalry.

Source: [en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)



Early 20th Century New Year's resolution postcard.

# LOOKING BACK

Over the years, and over many deployment rotations, we have collected some amazing photographs. Rather than just storing them in our archives, we enjoy sharing some of these incredible images with our readers.

These images are from Deployments in 2025

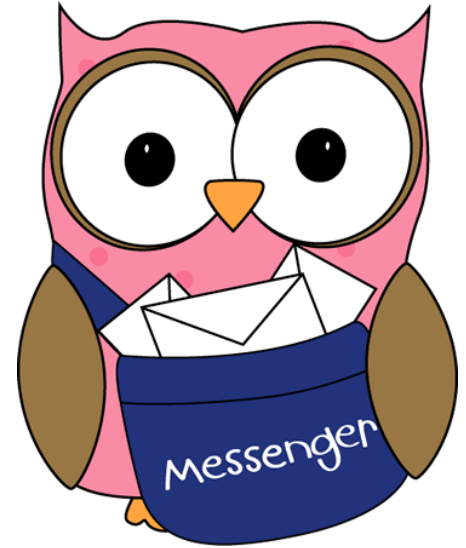


# PERSONAL MESSAGES

The deadline for contributions and personal messages for The Bugle is the last Friday of each month.

**The next edition deadline is 26 January 2026 at 4.00pm.**

Please email your DSOs: [community.deployment@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:community.deployment@nzdf.mil.nz).



## From In-Theatre

**Kia Ora fam,**

I hope you've had a fantastic start to the New Year and you're enjoying your Christmas holidays. Wifey,

I see your strength and the sacrifices you make every single day. None of it goes unnoticed. I'm so proud of you for holding down the fort and continuing to push forward, even when it's hard. I'm missing you more than words can express and I'm looking forward to seeing you all shortly. Love you all so much monkey butts.

**Kia ora Bubba**

De-Niece has chosen not to arrive on 31 December 2025 so your birthday does not have to be shared with anyone so far!!

Massive too to see you bike all those miles as you have! Cant wait to see what you turn your focus to next!

2026 has started off with hot temperatures here, lots of water time in the pool and at the beach and biking for the babies. Bronco is still sitting under the tree out the front getting pooped on by the birds lol!

Papa says hi Punkin!

Kelseys christmas crack was onnn!

Nēni: Tōia, he kōrero tahau mo aunty Spud (nods her head "no")

Nēni: Hani, he kōrero tahau mo aunty Spud  
Hani: hapi niuia! ..... & from Shrek "he honeymoon wizz whoooo".

Nēni: Orāio, he kōrero tahau mo aunty Spud, hari huritau aunty!

Ok, another rain warning coming, hope that doesnt mean they have to cancel Pa Wars.

Stay safe and know that we love you heaps.

Mā xoxoxo

**To my big girl.**

Hope your xmas was good and your cake .That's what my mates call me at home to .

We just finished dinner at the Cosy club with the Fockers and the Graces .Its new year day in the evening. Hope your biking is going well and your bum is not to sore from that exercise. I'm back at work next week cause I be off the week after for waka nats at karapiro. Then off for a new nee for a couple of months. In August be at the worlds in Singapore.

So that's the plan anyway. Will probably turn to shit anyway.

Everyone is good. Swimming and biking with there trainer wheels. Waiting for your blister to have baby. Going to be late.

Your brother is working long days at work over new years.

So will see him soon to. We just having a cup of tea and some crack biscuits your sis made.? They are nice. Ok nice seeing you  
Love you long time  
Daddy focker

## From Home

**Happy New Year Aunty Spud!**

We hope you had the best 30th in Egypt! We had the Jaynis whānau over visiting this week, uncle Hugh did a special shout out for your birthday in his annual speech, he's a crack up. We miss you heaps!! May 2026 be a cracker of a year! Nui te aroha, the Fockutias me Keith xx

Ngā mihi  
Kelsey

## Send your Valentine a Special Message

The February edition will be the one before **Valentine's Day** so if you are thinking of putting in an extra special message for your Valentine, make sure you don't miss the deadline of the **26 January 2026**

# A Woman's Work is Never Done

One afternoon a man came home from work to find total mayhem in his house. His three children were outside, still in their pyjamas, playing in the mud with empty food boxes and wrappers strewn all around the front yard. The door of his wife's car was open, as was the front door to the house.

Proceeding into the entry he found an even bigger mess. A lamp had been knocked over and the throw rug was wadded against one wall. In the front room the TV was loudly blaring a cartoon channel and the family room was strewn with toys and various items of clothing. In the kitchen dishes filled the sink, breakfast food was spilled on the counter, dog food was spilled on the floor, a broken glass lay under the table and a small pile of sand was spread by the back door.

He quickly headed up the stairs, stepping over toys and more piles of clothes, looking for his wife. He was worried she may be ill or that something serious had happened. He found her lounging in the bedroom, still curled up in the bed in her pyjamas, reading a novel. She looked up at him, smiled, and asked how his day had gone.

He looked at her bewildered and asked, "What happened here today?" She again smiled and answered, "You know how, every day when you come home from work, you ask me what in the world I did today?"

"Yes" was his incredulous reply.

She answered, "Well, today I didn't do it."



## Having a Best Friend

A story tells that two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face.

The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand;

*"Today my best friend slapped me in the face."*

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone;

*"Today my best friend saved my life."*

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him;

*"After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?"*

The other friend replied;

**"When someone hurts us we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."**

**Moral of the story:**

Don't value the things you have in your life. But value who you have in your life.





H A P P Y   N E W   Y E A R