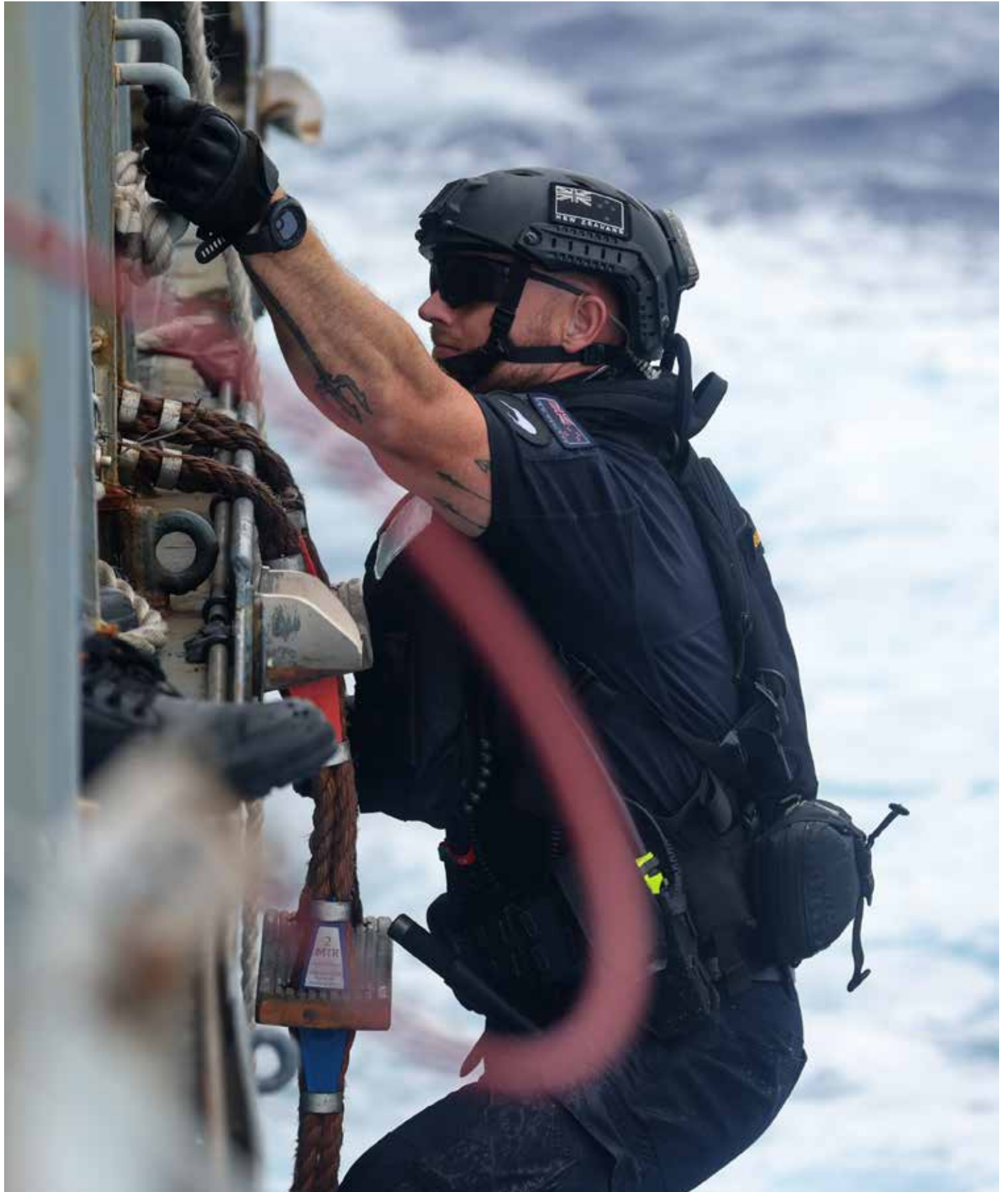


NAVY T O D A Y

OPERATION
MOA SUCCESS
FIRST OF CLASS
FLIGHT TRIALS
DEPLOYABLE BOARDING
TEAM IN HMS TAMAR



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When the pipe sounds hands to boarding stations, the atmosphere shifts. You go into game mode.”

– Lieutenant Dom Wells, Deployable Boarding Team



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Front Cover:
Deployable Boarding Team member POPTI Marc Thomas climbs back aboard HMS TAMAR after a boarding operation.

Photographer:
LPhot Unaisi Luke,
UK Ministry of Defence





Yours Aye

Acting Chief of Navy

As I write this, I reflect on the leadership changes our Navy and wider Defence Force is currently experiencing. Earlier this month we farewelled our Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral David Proctor, who retired from our Navy after 37 years of service and has embarked on new adventures in Canberra, Australia.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally acknowledge the contribution that RADM Proctor has made, not only over the last five years as Chief of Navy but also his service to our Navy, Defence Force, and New Zealand.

The process to select a successor remains underway and therefore a Relinquishment of Command ceremony was held at Te Taua Moana Marae, where RADM Proctor relinquished command and I had the privilege of taking on the duties as Acting Chief of Navy. Captain Shane Arndell, RNZN has assumed the duties as Acting Deputy Chief of Navy to ensure continuity of leadership during this period.

By the time this *Navy Today* goes to print we will know who our new Chief of Defence Force is and, noting the selection process for the Service Chiefs, Vice Chief of Defence Force, and Commander Joint Forces New Zealand has commenced, I expect the new Chief of Defence Force will be part of that selection process.

The level of leadership change that the Defence Force is experiencing comes with its challenges, particularly with respect to maintaining the focus on regeneration and outputs. To mitigate the impact of leadership change, we rely on the depth of policy, process, leadership, and management in the organisation. I have confidence that this depth exists within our Navy and a focus on the RNZN Regeneration Plan and Fleet Activity Plan will reduce the impact of change on our Navy.



This edition of *Navy Today* highlights some of the incredible mahi that is occurring in our Fleet and Naval Base, focused on progressing the Fleet Activity and Regeneration Plans. The way we operate allows us to conduct regeneration and 'raise, train and sustain' activities whilst delivering outputs. A great example of this is HMNZS CANTERBURY conducting Operation Moa, in support of the Solomon Island elections, whilst the ship was training and developing 60 new sailors.

This *Navy Today* also showcases how, with great effect, we work with our partner navies including mine countermeasures work with Australia and more recently our deployable boarding capability with the Royal Navy and Fiji's Ministry of Fisheries.

World events have led to a busy yet exciting start to 2024, with regional deployments and the need for global security serving as a reminder why we as a defence force, remain focused on our combat capability.

I am grateful for the mahi and sacrifices made by our sailors and their families, which enable us to contribute to international missions and enhance the reputation of the RNZN worldwide. Your dedication and support are instrumental as we strive toward our vision of being a world-class navy for a large maritime nation. Our focus on regeneration while maintaining operational effectiveness aligns with our strategic objectives and serves our national interests.

He heramana ahau.

Commodore Andrew Brown, RNZN

Acting Chief of Navy

Above: RADM David Proctor hands Acting Chief of Navy CDRE Andrew Brown his green pen.



WARNING
DO NOT STOW
FEET OR
EQUIPMENT
UNDER SEAT



TEAMING TOGETHER

HMNZS CANTERBURY and No. 3 Squadron helped ensure Solomon Islanders had a chance to cast their vote.

Photos: LAC Andy Jenkins



CANTERBURY JOINS FORCES TO ENSURE GOOD ELECTION

Operation Moa was a perfect example of HMNZS CANTERBURY's motto, Kotahitanga (Unity), says Commander Bronwyn Heslop, Commanding Officer.

Last month more than 200 New Zealand Defence Force personnel completed their support to Solomon Islands during a successful deployment to assist with the country's general election.

The NZDF personnel were part of a Joint Task Force sent on behalf of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), with a primary role of helping deliver polling kits, ballot boxes and election officials to remote areas of Solomon Islands.

Comprised of six main islands and more than 900 smaller ones covering a total area of nearly 29,000km², ensuring everyone in the country had access and a fair chance to vote was a significant logistical challenge, but one which the Task Force managed smoothly.

Over the course of 12 days, the Task Force delivered 105 polling kits, 361 ballot boxes and visited 43 villages.

Two NH90 helicopters, which were operated from the deck of CANTERBURY, played a significant role in transporting officials and election resources.

CDR Heslop says CANTERBURY moved all around Solomon Islands to provide the best support to the NH90s.

"We spent a lot of time in Iron Bottom Sound, we sailed around Guadalcanal Island and spent time in Indispensable Strait, all the while keeping the distance for the aircraft to the minimum possible.

"While the aircraft were away CANTERBURY was busy training the 60 new sailors on board who were all learning their new roles. In the six weeks away, we have several newly promoted Able Rates and a whole lot of new qualifications!"

Major Matt Wall, the NZDF Liaison Officer embedded with Solomon Islands' Electoral Commission based in Honiara, says the election work was an incredible challenge in logistics.



While the aircraft were away, CANTERBURY was busy training the 60 new sailors on board who were all learning their new roles. In the six weeks away, we have several newly promoted Able Rates and a whole lot of new qualifications!"

– Commander Bronwyn Heslop, Commanding Officer





“But we have teamed together to ensure everyone in Solomon Islands – even in the most remote villages – had an opportunity to cast their vote.”

CDR Heslop says after the election was complete, they were able to assist MFAT in other taskings, including the delivery of nearly ten tonnes of educational resources and around 240kg of World Vision aid supplies around the country.

Crews also conducted aerial surveys of landslides on the island of Santa Isabel, which was impacted by the heavy rains of Tropical Cyclone Jasper last year.

The survey data will be used by the National Disaster Management Office and Geological Survey Division to assess the risk of secondary disaster impacts and to mitigate further damage in the affected areas.

CANTERBURY hosted the largest overseas uniformed contingent for Anzac Day. The service took place near the waters of Tulagi Harbour, the site where HMNZS MOA was sunk during World War II (see page 31).



BY THE NUMBERS:

220 person New Zealand operation



2 RNZAF NH90 helicopters were based on board HMNZS CANTERBURY



105 Polling kits delivered



361 Ballot boxes delivered



43 Communities reached



224 Election officials and police transported





AOTEAROA PASSES FIRST OF CLASS FLIGHT TRIALS

“We were lucky with the weather,” says HMNZS AOTEAROA’s Ship Information Officer, Ensign Emma Walker. “We didn’t have to search too hard for rough seas and high winds.”

If that sounds like an absolute oxymoron, you’re not thinking in the context of First of Class Flight Trials.

Last month AOTEAROA passed its First of Class Flight Trials in partnership with No. 6 Squadron for the operation of a Seasprite SH2-G(I) helicopter from its flight deck.

Every class of ship capable of embarking and operating a helicopter needs to conduct trials to ascertain Ship Helicopter Operating Limits (SHOLs) – the safe limitations for a specific helicopter type flying to and from that particular class of ship.

The trials experiment with wind direction, ship movement and weight parameters for launching and recovering that helicopter, day and night.

The Ship’s Company and the flight crews have to learn how the wind behaves in relation to the superstructure of the ship and its course and speed, which could alter wind direction and speed over the flight deck. There’s also the ship’s roll and pitch to take into account, depending on how the ship is pointing into the swell.

Both the ship and Seasprite were fitted with precision instrumentation to correlate relative wind speed and direction with the helicopter’s performance. Readings of engine thrust, rotor torque, landing force and other parameters were taken into account.

The more variable and challenging the weather, the more complete the data gathered will be. Cruising around the Hauraki Gulf isn’t going to be enough.

Training Flight Commander Lieutenant Commander Matt Snazell says the difficulty with the ship moving was working out where the waves were coming from.

“AOTEAROA is such a big ship and it’s quite difficult to tell. You see the swell break over the bow of the ship, but then it takes few seconds for it to get to the flight deck at the very end. You’re really just having to sit and wait for the opportune moment.

“We did spend quite a lot of time going up and down with the ship and it looked quite hectic from the flight deck as it looked like we were moving all over the place,” he says.



The training enabled the helicopter crews to seek the “edge of the night flying capability” – and they found it.

“We had a few issues with really strong winds and turbulence coming over, so we worked out there were certain areas we couldn’t use. We can’t have winds from a certain direction or at a certain strength.

“Strong winds from a really tricky direction means it’s not safe to operate the helicopter, so that’s where we drew the line,” LTCDR Snazell says.

The crew used a combination of night vision goggles and flying unaided, using the lights from the ship.

Commander Rob Welford, Commanding Officer AOTEAROA, says the trials took nine days.

“Finding the operating limits required the ship to seek out bad weather and this was achieved with the help of an embarked meteorologist. A large swell was encountered near Cape Reinga, and strong winds off the East Cape.”

“The biggest waves were eight metres high, our largest roll was nine degrees and largest pitch was 5.7 degrees.”

The trials required nearly 28 hours of flying, 181 deck landings plus 41 other trials such as transfer simulations and refuelling.

“It’s also a very good test of the ship’s organisation and ability to coordinate flying operations in all variations of weather and sea states.”





MATATAUA TEAMS WITH UK TO HOLD FISHING CREWS TO ACCOUNT

Photos: LPhot Unaisi Luke, UK Ministry of Defence



When the pipe sounds hands to boarding stations, the atmosphere shifts. You go into game mode.”

– Lieutenant Dom Wells,
Deployable Boarding Team

During April, Royal New Zealand Navy personnel completed a six week-long deployment on the Royal Navy vessel HMS TAMAR, supporting the Ministry of Fisheries to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Fijian Exclusive Economic Zone.

Eight members of the Deployable Boarding Team (DBT) from HMNZS MATATAUA embarked on HMS TAMAR in Auckland before beginning a sweep of Fiji’s waters for vessels fishing illegally, as well as other illicit activity including poor crew welfare, pollution or involvement in the shark fin trade. Two additional officers embarked as bridge watchkeepers (see page 17).

Partnering with Fijian fisheries officers, the boarding teams from TAMAR intercepted and boarded 23 Fijian and Chinese-flagged vessels. Pleasingly, all vessels were complying with the terms of their licences. Though several vessels were found to have minor infractions with their long-line practices, this is likely due to a policy transition that is still being communicated to vessels.

The addition of 10 personnel to a Royal Navy Offshore Patrol Vessel made for a full ship, but Lieutenant Dom Wells says they were made very welcome in the wardroom and messes. “We felt part of the ship’s company in every possible way.”

He says their job with TAMAR was a perfect match to what the DBT was all about. The concept was stood up last year as a specialist capability providing a ready-to-go, suitably qualified, equipped and experienced resource to support a RNZN ship on operations or vessels of partner nations.

The fishing vessels’ crews were friendly, he says.

“We were probably a bit of a novelty. Some of them had been at sea for months. They seemed pretty happy to see us.”

Able Seaman Combat Specialist Darien Parsons posted to MATATAUA at the end of January after posting off HMNZS AOTEAROA.

“I’ve really hit the ground running with this posting,” he says. “I like the sense that this is more of a specialist role. As a SCS, you can really focus on that aspect of your trade. And it’s very different to other postings. I’m really enjoying it.”

He says the best part was engaging with the fishing crews. “We got to see their way of life, and they were curious about us and where we were from.”

The team were able to add value to TAMAR by providing Physical Training sessions for the ship’s company.



Petty Officer Physical Training Officer Marc Thomas, a member of the DBT and also MATATAUA's physical training instructor, would undertake the team's PT every morning to maintain physical fitness. Boarding activities such as wearing of body armour and climbing up and down ladders requires a good fitness level, he says.

"But TAMAR didn't have a Physical Training Instructor embarked, and the crew were doing their own personal training as best they could. So in the afternoons I would put on a PT session for the crew on the flight deck. It provided them with some structure and routine and we got a really good following. I feel a bit bad for them now we're gone!"

POPTI Thomas has returned to the Navy after a stint with NZ Police. "Navy and MATATAUA has got it spot-on with their work-life balance right now. I really like the environment I work in and the challenges and opportunities it provides."

Lieutenant Jack Walters, officer in charge of the DBT, said it was a great opportunity to represent the Navy and Aotearoa while supporting the Fijian Fisheries Authority and the United Kingdom.

"There is an estimated loss of FJ\$600m to IUU fishing in the Pacific region each year. This combined effort has strengthened deterrence and enforcement in the region, which will directly benefit our Pacific neighbours. It's heartening to see that there were no concerning reports from any of the vessels observed or boarded."

"TAMAR is a capable platform enabled by a professional and passionate crew, and we've appreciated the opportunity to integrate and strengthen our relationships with our UK counterparts."

Fisheries Officer Arieta Tunidau, from Fiji's Ministry of Fisheries, said: "Our partnership with the Royal Navy and Royal New Zealand Navy allows us to be at the forefront of fishing operations in our Exclusive Economic Zone."

"Together, we're ensuring surveillance and patrols are undertaken to address and deter illegal fishing."

TAMAR's Commanding Officer, Commander Tom Gell, said the work was a real demonstration of multi-agency and multi-national cooperation and partnerships in action.



"Fiji, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have come together for this vitally important mission to minimise the far-reaching and devastating impact of illegal fishing; I could not be prouder of HMS TAMAR's role in this cohesive team."



HMNZS MATATAUA providing opportunities for Junior Warfare Officers

When Sub Lieutenants Darren Pace and Elliott Bell posted to HMNZS MATATAUA, the RNZN's littoral warfare unit, they didn't think they would have the opportunity to embark on a Royal Navy ship to the Pacific.

Both officers graduated from their Officer of the Watch (Bravo) course in November 2023 before starting their first posting at HMNZS MATATAUA. This has given them an early insight to the RNZN's Littoral Warfare Force outputs and also provided opportunities for professional development.

They have taken on responsibilities such as HQ Battle Watch Captains during a work-up, assisted with exercise planning and acted as the Assistant Visit Liaison Officers (AVLO) for HMS TAMAR's recent visit to Devonport Naval Base. In recognition of their great work as AVLOs, TAMAR happily received them on board for a seagoing opportunity.

Along with the RNZN's Deployable Boarding Team (DBT), the two Sub Lieutenants embarked in TAMAR in Auckland and set sail for Fiji.

Both officers made the most of a passage up to Suva; they were on the bridge every day and were able to observe and contribute to a number of the ship's evolutions including pilotage, engineering casualty control drills, and sea boat operations. Off the bridge, time was used gainfully with dedicated lessons in navigation to further their warfare officer competencies, whole ship contributions, and flight deck physical training facilitated by the DBT on board.

SLT Bell discovered the Royal Navy have some unique traditions on board TAMAR, one being the game of 'dice'.

"The rules change daily but the loser is on clean-up duty! I found this out during my first meal on board with some of the Royal Navy officers saying, "the dice can tell a new joiner's throw..."

SLT Pace says the opportunity to work alongside another Navy was invaluable for their development.

"It will hold us in good stead for future operations when working alongside other partners in the Pacific. We were especially happy to exercise our GLX competencies at sea. The Ship's Company of TAMAR were very welcoming and were excellent hosts to us both."

OUR PEOPLE

1. Mark Te Kani is promoted to Commander at Defence House, with his wife Deborah and grandson Elijah changing the rank slides.
2. Personnel from HMNZS CANTERBURY attend a memorial service to HMNZS MOA in Honiara, Solomon Islands.
3. Chief of Defence Force AM Kevin Short presents POWTR Victoria Amosa with a CDF Commendation.
4. CDRE Andrew Brown, DCN joins CDR Muzz Kennett and BCT trainees at Devonport Wharf, collecting for Poppy Day.
5. CHAP Lloyd Salmon (right) attends the HMNZS MOA commemoration.
6. Senior instructor POCWS Hayden Maxwell with BCT trainees.
7. LT Jennifer Fellows passes a poppy to a Wellington commuter during Poppy Day.
8. RADM David Proctor, Chief of Navy, receives a trade challenge coin board as a farewell present from the Senior Rates Mess, with WOCWS Darren Crosby presenting the board.
9. Chief of Defence Force AM Kevin Short presents ASCS Ashlea Farrar with a CDF Commendation.
10. Promotion ceremony for ASTD Karen Brown. The Governor-General, Dame Cindy Kiro and Karen's partner LNP Matthew Bielby swapped out her rank slides to Leading Hand.
11. Chief of Defence Force AM Kevin Short presents LTCDR Kelvin Barrett with the Defence Meritorious Service Medal.
12. Poppy Day in Wellington. From left, LT Nate Hinton, CAPT Colleen Smith, LT Lucy Johnston and CDR Phil Eagle, all from the Directorate of Naval Engineering.







ANZAC DAY

From dawn services across New Zealand to South Sudan, serving New Zealand Defence Force personnel commemorated Anzac Day in a variety of ways, 109 years on from the Gallipoli landings.

Navy were particularly represented in Auckland. The midshipmen from Junior Officer Common Training (JOCT) 24/01 were among Navy personnel on Auckland's Domain in front of the Auckland War Memorial Museum at dawn, while trainees from Basic Common Training (BCT) 24/01 marched in the Devonport Anzac parade. It was a big day for the latter trainees, who went on to Go Media Stadium in Auckland to take part in an official ceremony for the Anzac Day clash between the Gold Coast Titans and New Zealand Warriors.

As Master of Ceremonies Lieutenant Mark Hadlow RNZVR opened the ceremony, Parade Commander Chief Petty Officer Seaman Combat Specialist Rawiri Barriball and flag bearer Ordinary Electronic Warfare Specialist William Joyce led an honour guard of BCT trainees onto the field. After the playing of The Last Post, Ordinary Logistics Supply Specialist Mahaki Wilson read out the Ode of Remembrance.

In Gallipoli, the 40-strong New Zealand contingent arrived with much of their luggage missing, due to weather disruptions in Dubai. Crucially, it included most of the band's instruments and many service dress uniforms.

Thanks to the Anzac spirit of cooperation, resources – including uniforms – were shared around. Using a cornet loaned from the Australians, Able Musician Orson Paine played the Last Post at both the Dawn Service at the Anzac Commemorative Site and the Chunuk Bair service later that morning.



NORTHLAND SAILOR PAYS HIS RESPECTS AT GALLIPOLI

**Chief Petty Officer
Communication
Warfare Specialist
David Tapene was part
of the New Zealand
Defence Force
contingent in Türkiye
taking part in the
Anzac commemoration
services for the
Gallipoli campaign.**

"I was fortunate to be picked as a kairākau – the holder of the ceremonial rākau (staff) – and as a kaihaka as well, or a performer."

He said it was important for him to attend the Gallipoli commemorations, because the generation of servicemen who landed at Gallipoli put Kiwis and Aotearoa on the map.

"These guys put their lives straight on the line. Out of respect for that you have got to go and give them a thank you, a haka of thanks."

Most of the 40-strong NZDF contingent arrived in Türkiye about a week before 25 April to acclimatise and rehearse before various commemorative events.

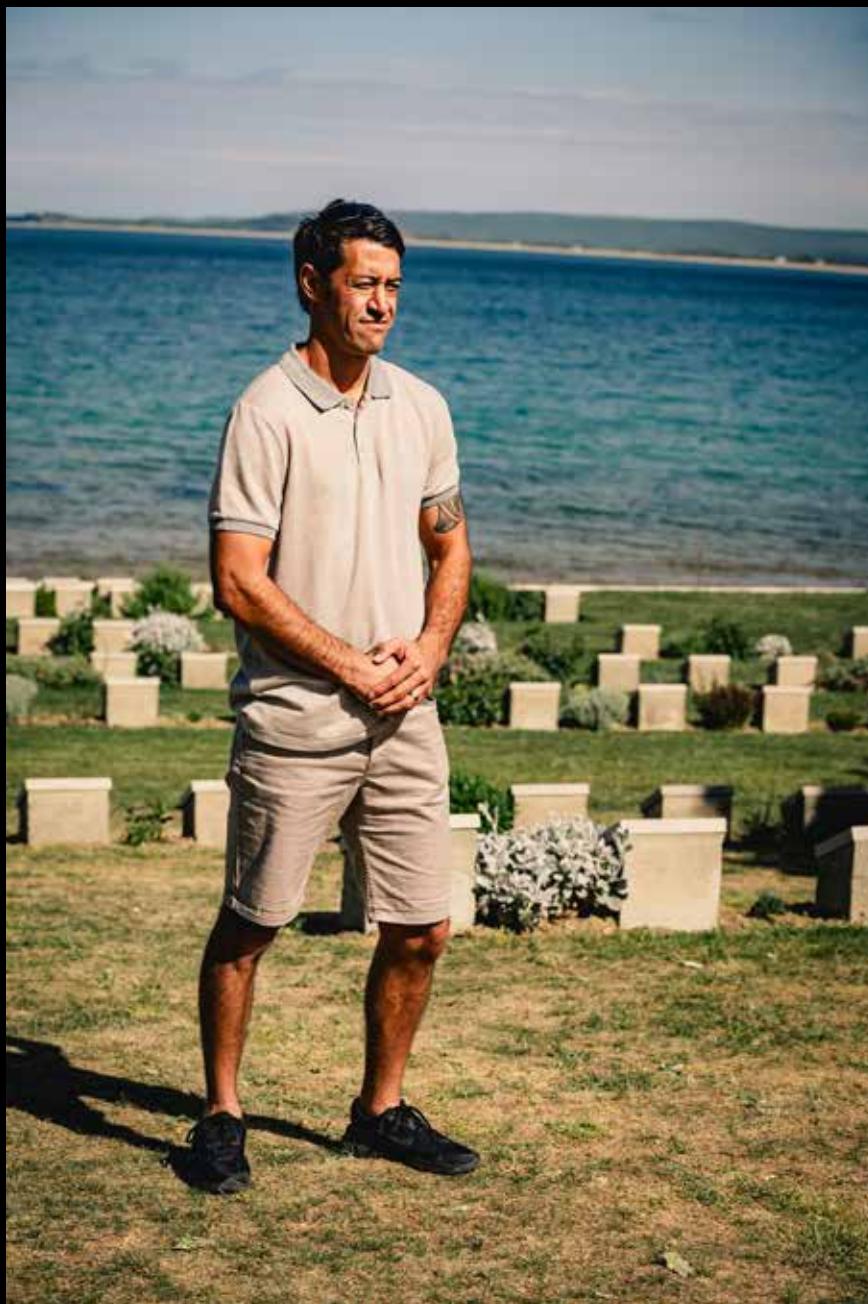
Battlefield tours were part of the programme so that members could not only learn more about their predecessors, but to a certain degree, follow in their footsteps.

"It's another level. This terrain is unreal and to actually walk it seems special. We are very lucky to be here."

The contingent visited the site of the Maori Pah, which was rededicated last year. The 477-strong New Zealand Maori Contingent of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force was mostly based there during the Gallipoli campaign.

Now, more than 100 years after the ill-fated campaign, the NZDF's Māori Cultural Group sang an uplifting song at the solemn site.

"We could perform a haka, but I thought we'd sing a song to uplift the wairua (spirit) and get them standing up too," CPOCWS Tapene said.



BARELY VISIBLE



Only just above the surface, an Uncrewed Surface Vessel sneaks through the Waitemata Harbour in the vicinity of HMNZ Ships MANAWANUI and AOTEAROA.

Recently, advanced Royal New Zealand Navy operators from the Defence Force's Tactical Uncrewed Surface Vessel (USV) Battle Lab provided a familiarisation session to HMNZS MATATAUA personnel on its basic operation.

Battle Labs are experimental activities to explore systems like a USV and understand the implications of introducing new capability into service.

The Navy has been experimenting with USVs since 2022. They are seen as useful capabilities for MATATAUA's littoral environment – shallow water, coastal operations – where they could be used in a dangerous environment to collect information to help with rapid assessments of areas of interest.

Joint Experimentation Manager (Maritime) Colin Moore says the ability to raise, train and sustain suitably trained personnel is a critical part of any new capability and is an essential research question in determining the feasibility of new and emerging technology.

“The intent of the Battle lab is to explore Littoral Warfare applications but the utility of USVs goes beyond this realm. As part of this familiarisation the team used the Tactical USV to sneak up on one of our ships in support of Maritime Training Group activities.”







SCHOOL TO SEAS

**FORTY YEAR-12 AND YEAR-13 FEMALE
STUDENTS HAVE AN EXCITING AND EVENTFUL
WEEK AT DEVONPORT NAVAL BASE.**

Photos: PO Chris Weissenborn





SCHOOL TO SEAS SUCCESS

The week-long 2024 School to Seas camp last month has seen 40 year-12 and year-13 female students from schools around New Zealand raving about the experience.

The camp aims to get young women interested in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) based careers – both within the Royal New Zealand Navy and the wider marine industry – and break down barriers and stereotypes.

In particular, it helps tackle misconceptions about life for women in the military and women at sea.

During the camp, participants took part in a range of hands-on STEM activities including building an underwater robot, and gained an insight into what life is like on a warship and the many trades on offer in the Navy.

They also extinguished fires and experienced the flood simulator, planned and executed a navigation exercise on a seaboat, sailed a Navy warship in the bridge simulator and met with Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro and Minister of Defence Judith Collins.

Grace Fale Wellington

With both mum and dad coming from military backgrounds, life in the Defence Force isn't an alien concept for Wellington student Grace Fale.

"I'm super keen on the Defence Force as a future career, and it was so inspiring to listen to so many awesome people within the Navy to help me decide on exactly what branch I'd want to specialise in," 17-year-old Grace said.

She said she loved the Sea Safety Training Squadron and learning about survival at sea.

Coming from a military family, Grace said her upbringing has helped her develop valuable life-skills.

"My mum and dad both served in the military before going into the police. They have both been very supportive of a career in Defence for me and my siblings.

"Growing up in such an environment has taught me resilience, perseverance and leadership skills that my parents have role-modelled to me," she said.

Now in her final year of school, the School to Seas camp has fuelled Grace's passion to join the Defence Force.

"I am definitely aiming to begin my career in the Navy, and would love to become either a Seaman Combat Specialist or Navy Medic," she said.

"Something on the frontline, getting hands-on, travelling and making those life-long connections."

Niamh Faith-O'Connell, Timaru

Niamh Faith-O'Connell, from Timaru's Craighead Diocesan School, has always wanted to join the New Zealand Defence Force and now the 17-year-old has been able to experience military life first-hand.

"I've always been interested in a career in Defence and originally I wanted to be a pilot," Niamh said.

"Then I found out about the Navy so I applied to School to Seas. I haven't got much experience in the maritime industry, but I've loved it. It's completely changed my perspective and opened up a lot of opportunities and options for me."



The camp has amplified the STEM subjects, and all the women who work in STEM. It shows me that it's very achievable for women."

– Niamh Faith-O'Connell

"I study sciences at school including biology, chemistry, physics and calculus, but they're all very academic subjects. I'm interested in the way the world works, how we've been shaped and the way we are in the world," she said.

"The camp has amplified the STEM subjects, and all the women who work in STEM. It shows me that it's very achievable for women."

In her final year of school, Niamh has big plans after finishing at the end of the year.

"I plan on working in Taupō as a parachute packer, then attending Camp America before finishing the year working on the ski fields in Japan," she said.

Beyond that, Niamh plans to join the Defence Force in a medic role in the first intake of January 2026.

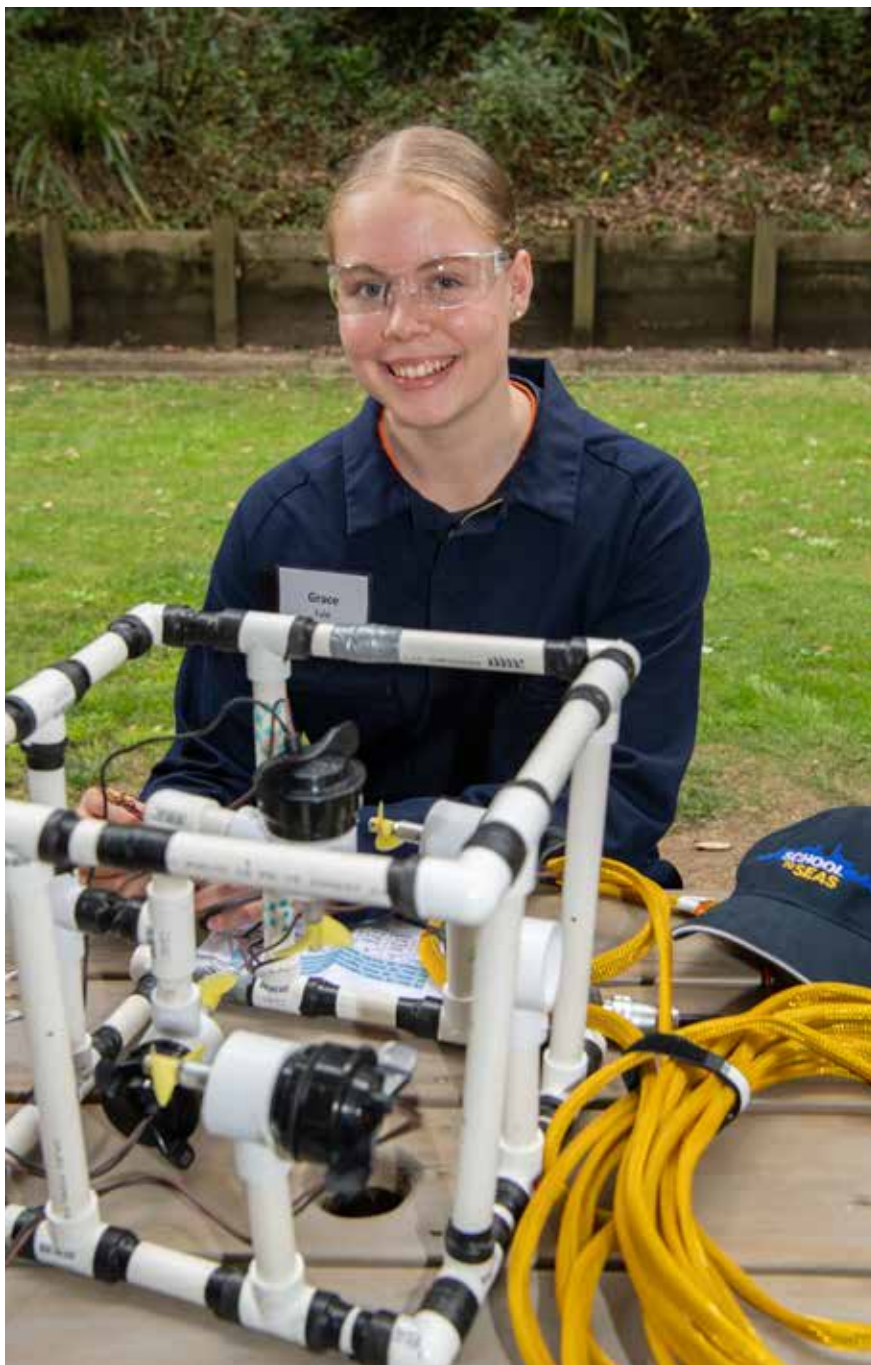
"I'm unsure what service I'll join as yet, but it's been such an amazing experience," she said.

"It's built on my love for the Defence Force and made me want to sign up as soon as I can."

Left: Niamh Faith-O'Connell drives the 'ship' using the bridge simulator.

Right: Grace Fale tackles the underwater robotics exercise.

Below: Niamh Faith-O'Connell learns about linework at the Seamanship Training Aid facility.





DUGONG GETS CLOSE TO THE REAL THING

Interoperability is the key word for Exercise Dugong 24, an Australian mine warfare exercise undertaken in March.

A Royal New Zealand Navy Mine Counter Measures (MCM) team from HMNZS MATATAUA joined forces with teams from the US Navy and Royal Australian Navy to exercise and develop a range of mine warfare skills, techniques and procedures.

Based out of Eden, New South Wales, it was an opportunity for MATATAUA's personnel to explore emerging and in-service mine warfare technologies and practise their skills alongside allies. The theme was demonstrating the ability to keep shipping lanes and a commercial port open.

It was not far off the real thing, with the Royal Australian Navy laying sea mines for the first time in nearly 50 years. The inert mines were laid in the approaches to Eden, one of New South Wales' largest fishing ports.

MATATAUA's Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) team, alongside a RAN Navy MCM Team, worked from Australian undersea support vessel ADV GUIDANCE, launching Autonomous Underwater Vehicles to locate and identify mines by sonar and video.

HMAS DIAMANTINA and GASCOYNE, coastal minehunters, worked alongside GUIDANCE to conduct clearance activities with their organic sonar, mine disposal vehicles and dive teams.

MATATAUA's MCM clearance divers and partner forces from Australia and United States conducted mine clearance and improvised explosive device operations staged from shore.

To add a realistic edge to training, live sensor readings from the mines were fed to operators ashore, who could tell if divers had successfully neutralised or detonated the mine.

Able Diver Tom Karaitiana-Hay says as well as worthwhile training, it was an excellent way of learning how other nations work and benchmarking MATATAUA's way of doing things.

"We were diving on mines on the seabed, identifying them, getting as much information as we could and relaying them to supervisors." Divers used a hand-held Diver Underwater Search System (DUSS) to pick up mine-like objects.

"We came over thinking it would be warm and crystal clear. But it was murky, cold water and a lot more sharks than in New Zealand," he says.

ADR Karaitiana-Hay, from Hastings, joined in 2017 as an Electronic Technician and switched trades. "It was the intensity of the diver training that appealed."

Able Hydrographic Systems Operator Gene Mace, working from GUIDANCE, says it was a very smooth, flowing operation.



“We had this big route lane to clear,” he says. “We’d go out in zodiacs, using the REMUS 300 autonomous underwater vehicle to find mines. There were heaps we had to locate. We’d work deliberately, expanding our lane out to the sea, and passing on the information to the divers. The two minehunters would work on the deeper ones.”

“It was very much our usual business, but working with a larger space and with other countries. And ADV GUIDANCE is pretty flash.”

He says they had trained closely with the US and Australian during Exercise Talisman Sabre last year and it was great to catch up with familiar faces again. “I’m sure it won’t be the last time we work together.”

AHSO Mace, from Queenstown, joined in 2022. “The Navy has always sparked my interest. It sounded very exciting, and it is. The ‘operation tempo’ at MATATAUA is very high but you get to do a lot of cool stuff”.

Top: Hydrographers prepare their Autonomous Underwater Device on the deck of ADV GUIDANCE.

Bottom: AHSO Gene Mace gets ready for a mission.

Looking out for others at sea

A yacht seemingly adrift between Waiheke Island and the Coromandel Peninsula caught the attention of HMNZS AOTEAROA during the ship's First of Class Flight Trials last month.

At 0700, the ship's lookouts observed the single-masted vessel not under power or sails, rolling heavily in poor sea conditions. No movement on deck could be seen.

AOTEAROA approached the yacht, using loud hailers and the ship's siren but received no response. Engineering and medical personnel were assembled and a sea boat was launched to investigate further.

However, the crew did emerge and explained that while sailing from Tauranga to Whangarei they had lost propulsion.

With no cell phone and limited comms on board they asked AOTEAROA to inform NZ Coastguard. The crew, who were notified of poor weather coming, declined any other assistance and later put up a sail and headed towards Auckland.



HMNZS MOA COMMEMORATION IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

New Zealanders from three NZDF missions and the New Zealand embassy in Honiara, gathered at Henderson Field memorial gardens to commemorate the sinking of HMNZS MOA which was bombed and sunk in Tulagi Harbour on 7 April 1943.

HMNZS MOA was one of three Bird class corvettes that served in the 25th minesweeping flotilla patrolling off the coast of Guadalcanal during World War II. In January of 1943, HMNZS MOA and HMNZS KIWI combined efforts to ground a Japanese I-1 submarine in Kamimbo Bay. Just over two months later HMNZS MOA was refuelling from USS ERSKINE in Tulagi Harbour when it was hit by a dive bomber and sank bow first in under four minutes with the loss of five lives and another 15 wounded.

The service was attended by NZDF members of the Solomon Islands Assistance Force who support the Royal Solomon Islands Police force to maintain peace and stability through community engagement and reassurance. Members of HMNZS CANTERBURY Ship's Company and the Commander of the Joint Task force supporting Solomon Islands' election, Colonel Anthony Childs, also attended.

Squadron Leader Ash Wilson, based in Honiara with the Forum Fisheries Agency, led the service.

"New Zealand has a long history with the Solomon Islands; this year marks the 81st commemoration of the sinking of HMNZS MOA," said SGNLDR Wilson.

"We respect and honour our past, our veterans and their service. This afternoon's small commemoration of remembrance is one of the ways that we honour their legacy. "

The Commanding Officer of HMNZS CANTERBURY Commander Bronwyn Heslop laid a wreath on behalf of the women and men serving in the Defence Force, followed by the NZ High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands Jonathan Schwass, who laid a wreath on behalf of the NZ Government.

"Participating in this memorial was special to me, because my first command as a young Lieutenant was HMNZS MOA, an Inshore Patrol Craft based out of Dunedin," said CDR Heslop. "One of my most memorable moments while in command of MOA was conducting a survey of Port Pegasus, in Stewart Island. This had last been surveyed by Captain James Cook, RN. What he achieved with a sextant and a lead line, I was checking with differential GPS and modern echo sounder – and his survey was 99.9 percent perfect!"

The last surviving sailor of HMNZS MOA, Geoffrey Attrill, died in 2018, aged 95.



Supporting youth programmes in Rarotonga



Petty Officer Youth Development Specialist Taelar Lepou loves the work she does at the NZDF's Youth Development Unit (YDU) in Auckland. And what was particularly special was taking that work to the Cook Islands, her heritage on her father's side.

In April the Unit delivered a two-week training programme to the Cook Islands Police and Prison and Probation Services, aimed at supporting vulnerable Pasifika youth.

Four NZDF personnel – a YDU clinical psychologist and three military instructors – ran an 'Introduction to Youth Development' course, before they supported Police and the Services to deliver a five-day 'Blue Light' programme, which was attended by 25 Cook Island youth aged 14 to 17 on the island of Aitutaki.

The NZDF provided similar support prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and more recently in December 2023.

The training assisted Cook Islands agencies in the psychological aspects of working with young people and addressing social issues caused by a lack of motivation, education, life skills, values and effective role models.

The team covered topics like behavioural psychology, mental health and wellbeing, understanding and supporting learning difficulties, and how to administer and deliver a youth development programme.

Practical aspects then covered situational awareness, incident control and de-escalation, as well as drill, physical training and leadership tasks.

POYDS Lepou was the contingent's YDU Training Sergeant, and said the training was well received on the Islands.

"We were able to show the benefits of using the 'military way' when working with young people. By this we mean structure and routine, teamwork, and believing that every young person can succeed.

"Having the psychologist, Ricki Tan, there really helped the students attending the course with understanding the 'why' to what we do. Our two other instructors – Staff Sergeant Javan Mataia and Corporal Liam Whareaitu – added value in the way they instructed staff on the course and in their interactions when leading young people.

Her father was born in Rarotonga, giving the deployment extra significance for her.

"He comes from Ma'ukei, a small island that makes up part of the Cook Islands. So it was an extra humbling experience to come here and give back.

"It would have been great to have had more time. They were wanting more which shows the positive working relationship we've established."

POYDS Lepou, from Plimmerton in Porirua, was inspired to join the NZDF after attending a service academy at Mana College.

She then joined the Navy in 2012 as a Communications Warfare Specialist, changing trade to become a Youth Development Specialist. She's been with the YDU for four years.

Top: YDU instructors SSGT Javan Mataia, POYDS Taelar Lepou and CPL Liam Whareaitu at the Youth Intervention Programme graduation parade in Aitutaki.



Service academy is a great option for young people who thrive in environments where a majority of the learning is done kinaesthetically. As a service academy student, having that interaction with the services put me on the right path, it absolutely steered me towards the NZDF. The academy was very hands-on and being part of it gave me a sense of accomplishment. My instructor was from the Navy and had shared stories that intrigued me. I loved the idea of travelling and I signed up for the adventure and to serve people.

- POYDS Taelar Lepou



“YDU is an unique trade. I believe in the purpose of what we do. I love that we can work with our rangatahi and give them the opportunity to experience a well-structured programme. The trade is open-minded about progressing and helping people be better.”

Inspector Maevarangi Kirikava of the Cook Islands Police said past NZDF programmes have had positive feedback from the community and this one was no different.

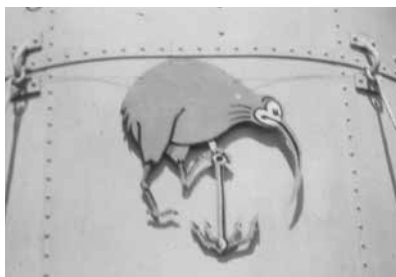
“The community were delighted to see New Zealand and Cook Island service people in uniform, and there were positive comments about the return of the NZDF to the programme,” said Inspector Kirikava.

“We are thankful the team were able to run an induction course for trainers to help boost our numbers; when we started we had eight trainers but this had been reduced to three. During their time here 10 members of the Police and Corrective Service officers were trained.”

Left: POYDS Taelar Lepou just before the graduation.

Right: Instructors and participants for the NZDF’s Introduction to Youth Development course.

MORE ENTITLEMENTS AND SUPPORT FOR JAYFORCE AND MURUROA VETERANS' FAMILIES



An inequity in the treatment of children of veterans exposed to nuclear radiation has now been addressed.

Service personnel have been exposed to nuclear radiation on three occasions; in Japan at the end of the Second World War, off Malden and Christmas Islands in the Pacific in the 1950s and at Mururoa in French Polynesia while observing French nuclear tests in the 1970s.

Veterans themselves all qualify for entitlements and support from Veterans' Affairs, but until last month their children weren't all treated equally.

Last year the independent Veterans' Health Advisory Panel reviewed the most up-to-date information

on the health impact of exposure to nuclear radiation on veterans and their descendants.

All of the conditions known to be associated with exposure to nuclear radiation are already covered by Veterans' Affairs entitlements; however, the panel noted there was an inequity in the treatment of veterans' children.

"The children of Operation Grapple veterans – those who served in the Pacific in the 1950s – have entitlements that aren't available to the children of veterans who served in Japan or at Mururoa. These include genetic counselling and genetic testing," said Head of Veterans' Affairs, Bernadine Mackenzie.

"The panel saw no good reason for the difference and recommended that consideration be given to extending the entitlements to cover the children of all nuclear veterans."

That recommendation was taken to Cabinet, which agreed the entitlements should be broadened.

"Genetic counselling helps people make informed decisions about genetic testing, and how the results and their implications can be interpreted. This, followed by the testing itself, is a package that should address the concerns that veterans have raised," said Ms Mackenzie.

"The panel also recommended the situation should be reviewed every seven to ten years so that New Zealand is aware of the most up-to-date information on the impact of exposure to nuclear radiation.



Left: HMNZS PUKAKI's Grapple funnel insignia. Photo: AAO 0030 / Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy.

Above: Radiation testing aboard HMNZS PUKAKI during Operation Grapple. Photo: AAO 0029 / Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy.

PROMOTIONS:

Congratulations on your promotion

Updated to 11 April 2024

LT Matthew ATKINSON
 LMT(L) Daniel BOWLER
 POMT(L) Malcolm BROWN
 AET Ryan COBURN-VINCENT
 ACT Brandon EDEN
 LEWS Jessie-lee ELLIS
 ASTD George FIDOW
 LTCDR Frank FRANCESCO
 WOCWS Charlotte GALLAGHER
 LCT Sean GATLAND

POMT(P) Sanjay GOUNDAR
 LCT Ethan GREGERSON
 POMT(L) Robbie JACKSON
 LTCDR Jerry KEMP
 LEWS Caleb KUTIA
 A/LTCDR Nikita LAWSON
 ALSS Sione LIUANGA
 POCH Rhys MACDONALD
 CPOPTI Te Teira MAXWELL
 A/LMT(P) Sean MCGINNISS
 POMT(P) JJ MCINNES
 LCH Ethan NANCEKIVELL
 LMT(P) Samuel NORRIS
 A/WOLSS Ben OWENS

LET Alex PASSMORE
 ACT Jack POWER
 A/LTCDR Quinn QUINLAN
 CDR David ROGERS
 POYDS Anya RURI
 A/LCH Caroline SIO
 LT Declan SWEENEY
 LET Phebe TAYLOR
 CDR Mark TE KANI
 LSCS Tremayne WAENGA
 LET Tenzin WEBER-STEPHENS
 ACT Tama WHATA
 A/LTCDR Sam WILSON
 A/CPOLSS Kendra YOUNG

15 ROUNDS

COMMANDER WIREMU LEEF



01

Job Title and description:

Director of Strategic Engagement (Navy) and I'm responsible for our international and domestic engagement; I am also responsible for the Navy's strategic relationships with NZDF, MoD, MFAT and other government agencies if needed. I also provide general staff officer expertise to and on behalf of the Chief of Navy, in order to provide Navy's input to NZDF or other initiatives.

02

Date Joined RNZN:

The first time was back in 1991 with a group of friends from High School. The second time was in August 2020, when I was asked to rejoin as CO MATATAUA.

03

First ship posted to:

The Mighty Warship – HMNZS SOUTHLAND, one of our Leander Frigates.

04

Best deployment and why:

HMNZS CANTERBURY operational deployment to the Arabian Gulf in 1996, I was a SLT bridge watchkeeper and air controller, this was my first time deploying to the Middle East and conducting operations with the US Navy. It included port visits to Bahrain, Dubai, Kuwait and India.

05

Hometown:

I grew up in Whangarei, but went to College in Kawakawa (Bay of Islands).

06

High School:

Bay of Islands College.

07

Favourite book:

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak, really great book.

08

Favourite movie:

The Arnie classic... *Predator*.

09

Favourite album:

My favourite CD growing up was *Rhythm Nation* by Janet Jackson.

10

Favourite song:

Too many to pick from, but can't beat *Wasted Years* by Iron Maiden (yes Metal!).

11

Favourite holiday destination:

You can't go past the Bay of Islands over the summer.

12

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

Because of the WON, I've become a bit of Body Fitness Training Junkie.

13

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

While I was out of the Navy I worked at as a Launch Safety Officer at Rocket Lab. In the year I was there we had six missions (five successful) therefore I figure I've launched more missiles than anyone in the Navy... not bad for an Aviator!

14

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

When I left the Navy I worked in the Oil & Gas Industry in Australia, my boss then was ex-Navy and his one piece of advice was that I needed to "smooth my edges a bit". Basically, that I needed to be adaptable in working with people who weren't military. I think this was great advice, which is still incredibly important in my current role where I'm meeting and engaging with a diverse range of people from here and abroad, military, government and civilian.

15

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

A place where a kid from the north can achieve!

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR SUPPORT AFTER YOU LEAVE NZDF



STAY IN TOUCH

Sign-up for our
monthly newsletter

Check out our website for more information about Veterans' Affairs and the entitlements that might be available to you. You might not need us now, but it is worth checking for the future.

veteransaffairs.mil.nz