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NGAPONA EX MEMBERS ASSN – LONGCAST

- 27 August 17 – HMNZS Ngaona Ex Members Assn AGM at 1500 at Pt Chevalier RSA
- 15 September 17 - Old Salts Lunch at Birkenhead RSA
- 17 September 17 - Northland Lunch, Bay of Islands Yacht Club, Waitangi
- 24 September 17 – NZ National Armed Forces Day
- 6 October 17 – RNZN Communicators 50th Anniversary, Navy Museum
- 20 October 17 – Trafalgar Day Lunch at Te Atatu RSA
- 20 October 17 - Old Salts Lunch at New Lynn RSA
- 17 November 17 - Old Salts Lunch at Titirangi RSA
- 15 December 17 - Old Salts Lunch at Orakei RSA

OLD SALTS LUNCH

Mustered 34 for lunch last Friday at the Hobsonville RSA. Many thanks to our guest speaker, CPO Euan La Trobe, who gave us an informative address on the current activities at Ngapona and a glimpse into the future. Euan is the Ngapona Coxswain, what some of you remember as the NTCI, a position that Barney held for many years.

HMNZS NGAPONA EX MEMBERS ASSN - AGM

The Ngapona Assn is holding its AGM on 27 August at the Pt Chevalier RSA - see attached flyer. We are looking for someone to take the minutes at our meetings. We plan to have only four meetings a year, so it is not an onerous task. Don't be shy, come and join us and help your Association.

CNS #9

Vice Admiral Sir Peter Phipps, KBE, DSC & Bar, VRD RNZN - CNS April 1960 - June 1963

Royal New Zealand Navy - Chief of Naval Staff & First Naval Member

Sir Peter Phipps is often referred to as the founding father of the Royal New Zealand Navy. He progressed through the ranks from Ordinary Seaman to Vice Admiral, and had a distinguished World War II record. On his retirement from the RNZN he held the position of Chief of Defence Staff (now CDF).

He joined the Canterbury Division of the Naval Reserve as an Ordinary Seaman in 1928. He was commissioned as a Sub Lieutenant in 1930 and was mobilised at the outbreak of war and travelled to the United Kingdom in 1940. His first command was the minesweeper HMS Bay, which operated as part of the 24th Minesweeping Anti-submarine Group. In September 1940, 50 aircraft attacked the convoy that HMS Bay was helping to escort, and she suffered bomb damage. Sir Peter was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bringing his damaged ship home safely.

He took command of HMNZS Scarba, one of four minesweeping trawlers purchased for New Zealand. They arrived in Auckland in August 1942. Sir Peter became commanding officer of HMNZS Moa which sank the Japanese submarine I-1 in the Solomon Islands. Sir Peter was awarded a Bar to his DSC. For heroism at Guadalcanal, the United States of America awarded him the Navy Cross, their second highest award for valor. for this action. In April 1943, Phipps was wounded when Japanese aircraft sank Moa at Tulagi Harbour. The ship sustained a direct hit from a 500-pound bomb and sank within four minutes. Five ratings were killed and seven were seriously wounded.

Phipps then became the Senior Officer of the 25th Minesweeping Flotilla in the Solomons. He represented the New Zealand Government at the surrender of the Japanese forces in Nauru and Ocean Island.

After the war, he commanded the training base HMNZS Philomel, where in April 1947 he had to deal with a mutiny of sailors from the base and several ships, over low pay and poor working conditions. He then became the executive officer of the cruiser Bellona. Between 1953 and 1955, he went overseas and served in a senior position in the Admiralty. He then took command successively of the cruisers Bellona and Royalist. When Phipps went to take command of Royalist in 1955, diplomat Frank Corner found

that Phipps agreed that the Royalist was completely unsuitable for New Zealand's requirements, and Phipps regarded her purchase as an unmitigated disaster. Phipps' later career was a series of firsts for a New Zealander – he was the first NZ naval officer appointed to the New Zealand Naval Board (1957), the first to reach flag rank, the first to be appointed to Chief of Naval Staff (1960) and the first Chief of Defence Staff (1963), following the establishment of the Ministry of Defence. Phipps was knighted for his services in the 1964 Birthday Honours. On his retirement in 1965, he was created vice-admiral. He died in a car crash on 18 September 1989.

HMNZS MOA

The "Bird Class vessels had been ordered by the Admiralty in 1939 and with the outbreak of World War II they were urgently needed along with every other vessel that could be mustered by Britain and her Allies.

This class was based on the design of an experimental Royal Navy minesweeping trawler were the first new ships to enter service with the Royal New Zealand Navy, their principal peace time function was training, and in wartime, minesweeping and escort duties. After working up in Northern England she went to New Zealand In December 1942, the four ships of the 25th Minesweeping Flotilla, comprising the three 'Bird class' corvettes HMNZS Kiwi, Tui, and Moa, with HMNZS Matai as senior ship, had deployed to the Solomons.

Just one month after arriving in the hectic battle grounds of the Solomons, she was involved in an incredible feat of "David against Goliath"

The night of 29-30 January 1943 proved eventful for two ships of the 25th Minesweeping flotilla of the RNZN. HMNZS Kiwi and Moa were patrolling one mile apart off Kamimbo Bay at the north-west end of Guadalcanal when the asdic operator obtained a 'contact' at 3000 yards with the vessel immediately identified as a submarine . Kiwi at once altered course toward the enemy and increased to full speed to attack with depth charges while the Moa kept her course and acted as ASDIC directing vessel. The outline of the submarine could be clearly seen when the Kiwi dropped a pattern of six depth charges, one of which fell in the wake of the periscope. On the next contact, after another pattern of depth charges, the submarine was forced to the surface, its electric motors apparently disabled.

The Japanese submarine I-1 tried to escape in the darkness using her diesel engines under the high land of the island but her efforts were in vain. Kiwi and Moa turned towards their foe firing star shells and high explosives one of which fired from Kiwi found its mark. The submarine replied with her 5.5-inch 125mm gun with two shells passing close over the Kiwi and three very close to the Moa.[2] At this time the Kiwi prepared to ram the submarine on the port side abaft the conning tower. Although she hit the submarine she kept up hot fire with every gun that could be bought to bear.

During the entire battle the Kiwi's searchlight and signalling lamp were trained on the submarine. The searchlight was controlled by Leading Signaller Campbell Buchanan at considerable risk to himself. Into the action Buchanan was hit and although mortally wounded remained at his post uncomplaining until relieved. He died of his wounds at Tulagi the following day. This act of courage won him the US Navy Cross and a posthumous mention in dispatches. In a fierce action that lasted more than an hour,

Kiwi rammed the submarine three times before I-1 finally struck a reef and was wrecked.

The next night Moa was again in action, this time with HMNZS Tui, when they encountered some Japanese landing barges. During the engagement, in which Moa sank at least one of the barges, she received a hit on her forward 4 inch gun, which passed through the sighting aperture and exploded, setting fire to the ready-use cordite. All members of the gun's crew suffered burns and some were wounded by splinters as Leading Signalman J. Salter recalled:

'Kiwi was out of action after ramming the submarine so we went up with Tui on the next patrol. We ran into a fleet of four barges. We sank one and I think Tui also sank one. One barge fired at us and put a shot through the shield of the gun; it was about an inch in diameter and exploded on the bridge. Ian Fraser had a shell in his arms when a splinter ignited it and it went up in his arms. The flames were higher than the masthead. The whole guns crew were put out of action with very, very bad burns and splinters. The gun was jammed but the gunners managed to clear it the next day. Some American patrol boats came alongside and took our wounded ashore.'

For the first week of April, Moa was engaged in the routine work of patrolling and escort duties around Guadalcanal, being teamed-up with all of the other ships in the New Zealand 25th Minesweeping Flotilla at various times. Air raids remained a feature of this period. The ship spent the night of 5 April in Purvis Sound with a defective generator and went to Tulagi for water on the 6th, remaining there overnight. On 7 April Moa was back on patrol, but due to fuel from a hulk in Tulagi in the afternoon.

On this day, the Japanese launched their I-GO operation to destroy bases and ports of the Allied forces at Guadalcanal, Tulagi. This plan was directed by Yamamoto as a last effort. This had to be delayed because of a large air raid, composed of 98 Japanese aircraft and Moa remained screening outside the harbour until the "all clear" was given. Lieutenant Commander Phipps of Moa then let an American destroyer fuel ahead of him, because it was urgently needed back on patrol. Moa eventually got alongside the hulk and he retired to his cabin. Without warning there was then a further air raid. Moa opened fire with its Oerlikon, but the ship was immediately hit by two 500 pound bombs, one going through the captain's cabin, missed Lieutenant Commander Phipps by a few feet, continued on through the bottom of the ship, before it exploded. The explosion threw the wardrobe across the door of the cabin and he was lucky not to have been hit by his safe as it hurtled through the air. A second bomb exploded in the boiler room and with the roar of escaping steam from the boilers Moa settled quickly. With shrapnel from the bomb blast in his arms and legs and an ankle broken, Peter Phipps had to climb over the wardrobe that had fallen in front of the door, to get out. On the upper deck he came across Chief Engine Room Artificer Anstis who was lying in the scuppers and tried to lift him, but found that he had not the strength and dropped him. Anstis' head struck a fuel coupling as he fell, causing a wound that required several stitches. As he later recalled, he was the only one on board to be injured by his own captain.

On the bridge Leading Seaman Jack Salter and Ordinary Telegraphist Bright saw that Signalman Thomas was severely wounded and unconscious. The two fitted him with a life jacket and as the ship sank beneath them, they floated off the bridge, supporting

Thomas. Having got off the ship, Lieutenant Belgrave saw that Assistant Steward Molloy was unconscious and going down with the ship and immediately dived under and rescued him. Salter and Bright were later awarded the British Empire Medal.

It only took 3½ minutes for Moa to sink and five ratings were killed in the action and another 15 wounded. A total of four ships were sunk during this air raid, including the tanker, which was the prime target.

Moa's sea boat had got away and with some landing craft rescued most of the survivors. After some time in the water, during which he later recalled being machine-gunned, Lieutenant Commander Phipps found himself lying on the beach with a priest cutting off his oil soaked uniform in order that his wounds could be treated. The wounded were repatriated to New Zealand, Lieutenant Commander Phipps being the last to return, on 26 April 1943.

Don't forget to register for Trafalgar Day Lunch!

Take care

Jerry Payne

021 486 013

President

HMNZS Ngapona Ex Members Assn Inc

"There are good ships, and there are wood ships, the ships that sail the sea."

"But the best ships are friendships, and may they always be."

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