

HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

LONGCAST

- 19 January 18 – Ngapona Assn Lunch at Swanson RSA
- 16 February 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Manurewa RSA
- 18 February 18 – Northland lunch at Bay of Islands
- 9 February 18 – Navy Club Lunch at Remuera Club
- 16 March 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Waiheke RSA
- 13 – 16 April 18 - HMNZS Otago and All ships Reunion, Poenamo Hotel, Auckland
- 15 – 18 June 18 – Greenies Weapons Electrical Reunion at Napier

Please visit our website at www.ngapona.org.nz

Hi Folks
Hope you are able to enjoy the fine weather.

MONTHLY LUNCH

Our next monthly lunch is this Friday at the Swanson RSA. This is always a good meal at a reasonable price. Look forward to catching up on your Xmas dits.

NORTHLAND LUNCH

Don't forget the Bay of Islands next month.

NGAPONA ASSN WEB SITE

I am continuing to work on the web site, we now have a Members Login which will allow you to add a blog.

I still need more photos with captions so I can add them to the gallery. Please email them to editor@ngapona.org.nz

A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 12

The end of 1971 completed a very full year. From the final weeks of my TARANAKI posting early in the year, to learning my way round the new job at the NBCD School, a baby arrival and moving into our own home it was good to get to Xmas break and just wind down at the new house.

January 1972 started with posting into PHILOMEL Men Under Training. I think it was this period where they separated the school/training side of PHILOMEL from the ship support side and created HMNZS TASMAN. TASMAN ran all the promotional and trade training although my memory is we still kept duties in PHILOMEL.

The Advanced Engineering Course consisted of trade training skills (filing and chiselling a block of steel), some use of machine tools. Also had school which was designed to sort out those to advance to Mechanics training and those whom would stay in the ME side of the branch. There was also the usual parade training, Physical Training and the odd Padre session thrown in.

I found the schoolwork pretty basic and also probably had a head start on some of the other course members having had eight months of Artificer training in 1965. However I must admit confronting for the first pneumatic controls as fitted to WAIKATO and CANTERBURY was a steep learning curve.

The six months of the course went rather quickly and I found I enjoyed it. There were I think eighteen on the course, some of the course members already held Boiler Watchkeeping Certificates which was another requirement for promotion. So the requirements for promotion were Professional Exam pass, this was two three-hour exams plus Command Exam and Boiler Watchkeeping Certificate. As with other promotions you went on a roster for promotion.

You could get promoted without a Boiler Ticket but from memory you didn't get confirmed in rate without one, and having a Boiler ticket helped build your points on the roster. Having passed the course we all waited with bated breath for our posting details.

Fortunately I was posted with two classmates to OTAGO, which was deploying to Hawaii and sailed very soon after course completion so I was straight back into watchkeeping. Lucky for me the two other classmates failed one of the two professional exam papers so although they were higher points wise for promotion I jumped them as a result of passing both exams. This became very important during the trip.

I was watchkeeping in the Boiler room as the evaporator watchkeeper. So the arrangement was that so long as the evaporators were running steadily I can spend time getting experience for my Boiler ticket.

We arrived in Hawaii berthing in Pearl Harbour. This was an amazing experience just with the number and size of ships alongside. We had a weekend then started training in preparation for the fleet exercises or RIMPAC as the exercise was known and I believe still is.

Sailing with a large number of ships really was quite daunting, we were just really an insignificant player, however it was good training especially for the Operations Department. It was somewhat disconcerting to step into the Ops Room at night and see all the contacts around; you went to bed hoping the Officer of the Watch was on the ball and we could sleep safe.

The Captain was Commander Tyrell. We called him two ton Tyrell, as he liked to use high power regularly. During this time the RAN was under fuel restrictions and weren't allowed above twenty knots. Two Ton Tyrell especially liked to ring down two hundred RPM and rocket past the Aussies at twenty-eight knots giving them a friendly wave as we went passed.

Arriving back alongside from the first phase of the exercise, unfortunately when we went to shut down one of the boiler main stop valves jammed open, so that meant that we were going to have a full days work on the Saturday stripping the valve to repair it. In the middle of the job the Captain arrived in the Boiler room with the American Admiral in tow. It was quite a significant gesture and made the Brian McBrearty (Mechanician 2nd Class) and I feel as though we were important and am sure it helped speed the job up.

We sailed again on the Monday morning for the second part of the exercise. Another interesting exercise carried out was replenishment at sea (RAS). This could be stores or fuel. The best was fuelling, the ship would take up station astern of the tanker and when both ships were ready we would come up to twenty-six or twenty-eight knots and approach the tanker from astern. When adjacent to the tanker both telegraphs would come to stop. By stopping both shafts they acted as a brake and the ship speed would rapidly fall off. When the two ships were at matching speed the telegraph would come to half ahead again with revolutions appropriate to keep the ship level with the tanker. This evolution was always an Engineering Branch show off; it was a source of pride to complete the exercise smartly without lifting safety valves. Some of the Boiler Room watchkeepers were very, very good at this manoeuvre. The other thing about fuelling on the type 12 frigates is that to fuel you took the lids off the fuel tanks. These were like a round manhole that was held shut by a strong back across the top. The Chief ME at the fuelling point controlled the fuelling, normally this was in front of the bridge structure and behind the turret. If you were in charge of one of the tanks you opened the fuelling valve on instruction from the point. You didn't get time to use a dip tape the rate of fuelling was too fast, the tankers normally pumped at between 100 and two hundred tons of fuel per hour, so the tank was filled rather rapidly and you had to get the valve shut before the tank was overfull. We would work on the number of rungs on the tank ladder as the level of fuel.

The other thing was as soon as the fuelling was complete the ship would pass back the hose and increase power to 26-28 knots again to break away from the tanker and return to its position in the fleet so they inevitably used a large amount of rudder which caused the ship to heel over to about 15-20 degrees. So if you didn't get your tank lid on with the strong back secured you would suddenly find fuel cascading around your feet from the tank. As most of the tank lids were in mess decks you didn't win too many friends if you flooded their mess with fuel. Of course it was the black thick furnace fuel oil in those days.

Time ashore in Hawaii was well spent visiting all the sights. The two for me that come to mind are: The ARIZONA Memorial and Punch bowl. The ARAZONA Memorial is like an arch built over USS ARIZONA, which was sunk by the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbour to start the American involvement in the Second World War. It is really sobering to stand on this memorial and realise that in the hull of the ship, which you can see below you, there are still the remains of over one thousand sailors.

Visiting Punchbowl, which is a huge crater, you are just amazed by the number of graves of servicemen buried here. Even while we were there they were still interring casualties from the Vietnam War, which was in full swing during those years.

We departed Hawaii somewhat sad to leave, the weather had been great and some of the entertainments provided for servicemen at their clubs ashore were top line acts. We were made very welcome and thoroughly enjoyed time with other navies. It was a long trip in company with the RAN as we were going from Hawaii to Sydney, Australia. The weather was fine for this whole deployment so we managed to get some time in the sun during the long slow steam.

One of the Engineering Petty Officers had been injured playing rugby in Pearl Harbour. He was unfit to travel with us so was left ashore and would transfer directly back to NZ when he was fit to travel. I was the beneficiary of this as I got promoted to Temporary Petty Officer and as such was allowed to concentrate on my Boiler Ticket full time.

We spent time in Sydney and took part in an exercise on completion of that we sailed for NZ. During the passage across the Tasman I sat and passed by written Boiler Watchkeeping Certificate and also passed the practical exam so was awarded my Boiler Ticket prior to arrival home.

The PO we had left in Hawaii was to join the ship on arrival home. This meant I had to relinquish my temporary rate. I was programmed to be duty on the Saturday after our arrival home. Thinking I was going to revert to LME I figured I wouldn't be duty on the Saturday. No such luck, they decided to take my temporary rate off me on the Monday so I could still do my duty on the Saturday!!

After some maintenance we sailed for an exercise out of Auckland and had the following weekend in Wellington. As I was now Boiler watchkeeping on my own with my brand new Boiler Ticket it seemed to be a very quick couple of weeks. I also had confirmation that I had been selected for Mechanician training starting in 1974. So this was great, as I knew that again I would be home with my family for the next two years.

We had purchased a car prior to my joining OTAGO so we were now mobile. This was purchased with what they termed a signing on bonus. The Engineering Branch was short staffed so was one of the methods they were using to encourage us to sign on. I was due to complete my initial engagement in 1973 (eight Years) so this extension took me out another four years to 1977 and I saw it as making sense as I was fairly sure I would get a Mechanicians course so with two years guaranteed at home with family I didn't see that extension as too onerous.

So again I got to Xmas and looked forward to drafting back into PHILOMEL in January 1973.

To be continued

Take care

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Editor

HMNZS Ngapona 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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