

# HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

## LONGCAST

- 9 February 18 – Navy Club Lunch at Remuera Club
- 16 February 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Manurewa RSA
- 18 February 18 – Northland Lunch at Bay of Islands, 1230 at Kerikeri RSA
- 16 March 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Waiheke RSA
- 13 – 16 April 18 - HMNZS Otago and All ships Reunion, Poenamo Hotel, Auckland
- 20 April 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Onehunga RSA
- 15 – 18 June 18 – Greenies Weapons Electrical Reunion at Napier

Hi Folks

### **NGAPONA ASSOCIATION WEB SITE**

Thanks to those who have sent photographs for the web site but I am still looking for more. Don't be shy, share your memories don't leave them shut up in a photo album. Email them to this address.

### **CHANGE OF DIVISIONAL COXSWAIN**

The HMNZS Ngapona Divisional Coxswain. CPOMEL Euan La Trobe. will post out on 12 February. His (at this stage interim) relief is CPOWM Mike Richards.

### **NORTHLAND LUNCHEON - VENUE CHANGE**

Northland Luncheon - Sunday 18 February 2018, 1230 at Kerikeri RSA. Further information contact Jill Thompson 09 836 5191 or 021 274 4426, Email: [jillt.nz49@gmail.com](mailto:jillt.nz49@gmail.com) Need to know the numbers attending by 13 February 2018 please.

## A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 15

So it was another joining routine on TARANAKI and no respite. No sooner had I got all the ticks on the bit of paper and it was off to see the Warrant Mechanician for my directions and the way ahead.

Oh Boy I have boiler rooms in charge as a Petty Officer, and as there were only three CPOMEA's who were in three watches at sea I was informed I would go straight to the engine room double banking for my Unit Watchkeeping Certificate to enable the Chiefs to be in four watches at sea. Not a problem I thought until Yorkie informed me that my passing out practical exam would be the afternoon watch of the final battle problem in Australia.

Somewhat shattered my dream of going to sea and easing back into watchkeeping. The normal practice would have been a spell in the Boiler room ensuring I was back up to speed with boiler watchkeeping before shifting over to the engine room to start the double banking for unit ticket.

TARANAKI was over due for a proper refit so we knew the coming deployment would require a fair bit of work to ensure that we could complete the work up in Australia including a full on battle problem to complete it and then deployment from Sydney to join the Far East Fleet.



I must admit the few weeks on-board prior to deployment flew by, it was head down and proverbial up in the boiler room ensuring all was steam tight and all was ready for a

problem free trip. It was also a hectic time on the home front ensuring everything was squared away as much as possible, however I have been blessed with a very organised and capable wife so really had no fears that all would be well whilst I was away. One of the interesting pre-requisites for this trip was the requirement that all the crew had to have a passport. This was the first time I had been overseas and this was a requirement. Also these were the days when Senior Rates wore khaki uniform. One of the notable things about the introduction of khakis was the model they used actually seem to represent a human body and the fit was quite neat. Unlike the N08's and No3's especially that the cutch was around your knees and quite a few adjustments needed to be made to ensure it looked something like a uniform.

We finally slipped away from Devonport at 1000 as per the norm in those days. I had been in the night before to do my first flash up and managed to get a few minutes on the jetty to farewell my family. This was a pretty emotional time as it was really the first time I was deploying for six months plus since I had been married and now there was the added emotion of saying goodbye to my two young children whom were aged 3 and 13 months respectfully. So with a pretty heavy heart but a sense of excitement of what was ahead we moved out into the stream and cut off our ties with NZ for the forthcoming six months.

The passage across to Sydney was fairly calm but there was a lot of learning going on with my introduction to the requirements of Unit Watchkeeping and the responsibilities that went with it. Also of course the ship was constantly running exercises to get the crew up to speed prior to starting our work up.

Arrival in Sydney was nothing new for me as I had been there a few times on INVERELL and OTAGO. The difference this time was that I was in charge of a part of ship and everything required doing over the weekend to be ready to sail first thing on Monday morning to start our work up.

We were in Sydney about six weeks or so, in that time every weekend involved turning to in the boiler room to fix steam leaks, water and fuel leaks and also carry out routine maintenance. Towards the end of the work up we had a weekend in Newcastle. I was forbidden to visit the boiler room over this weekend, as Yorkie wanted to ensure my batteries didn't run out. This was a noble thought on his part but unfortunately what it meant is that we had twice as many defects the following weekend when we returned to Sydney.

Never mind the thought was appreciated and after a hectic maintenance weekend back in Sydney we finally sailed for our final battle problem. I had thought that there was no way the Engineering Officer and the Warrant Mechanician would allow me to do the afternoon watch on my own. However that dream was quickly put to bed and I was told the normal Chief of the Watch would be in the workshop and the Warrant Mech would be both a safety number and also assessing me during the watch and the breakdown drills that would be part of it. The assessment crew from the RAN (Australian Navy) were very familiar with the steam plant we operated and they kept throwing problems at you until you basically were dead in the water. Dependant on how many different

issues you managed to deal with and the timeframe was a requirement for their assessment as to whether you passed or failed the work up.

I must say that my memory of it was the time went by in a blur. Every time you thought you had gained control of the situation they just threw another spanner in the works. I must admit that the real heroes of this are the Junior Rates as Chief of the Watch I was not allowed to leave the control position and you were hugely reliant on your fellow watchkeepers to do exactly what you asked and then report back directly, I had about twenty things going on in my brain at once, through this you had to keep the bridge informed of their power available so you had to remember where you were up to, what was broken and what still worked.

It must have gone okay as I was informed that afternoon that from then on I would be watchkeeping on my own and the CPOMEA's were pretty happy with that so it was a long celebration for both successfully now being in four watches and of course also completing and passing our final battle problem.

A couple of notable things come to mind over the time spent in Sydney. Every Monday we would sail from Sydney in company with three or four RAN ships. By the Wednesday we could almost guarantee that we would be still in the Tasman but on our own, the other ships seem to always require returning to Sydney with some defect requiring help. The other thing was I had saved money and the final weekend alongside I wanted to fly home for the weekend to see my family. My request was declined as NZ was out of area, however the joke was that some guys were flying to Perth which was twice as far away but still in area, work that one out. Needless to say I was not overly impressed.

Sydney was not all work and no play. We discovered a wine bar, Journeys End, in Woolamaloo and spent quite a few pleasant evenings there. Also up at Kings Cross, trying to remember the western type bar, oh yes, The Texas Tavern. We were having a few beers in there one night and someone blew up a French letter. This became a game of volleyball, which everyone thought was funny until it lodged in a chandelier and one of the guys tried to drive it out with a fair old slap, at that stage the Bouncers threw us out, well asked us to leave anyway.

So we departed Sydney for the rest of our deployment and made our way around through Bass Strait to Perth and then on to Singapore. The weather was a little rough in Bass Strait but not too bad so we made good time. The passage to Perth required a fuelling stop in Esperance. This was purely a fuelling stop and although we had leave it was only for four hours. A couple of us decided to go for a walk and was really good to get off the ship and stretch the legs. We were strolling back a lovely couple pulled over and offered us a ride back.

It was pretty hot so didn't require a great decision for us to jump in the car and motor back. We invited them down the mess for a beer and in talking found out their son was a Doctor at Royal Perth Hospital. We were happy to find out his contact details and this ensured we would have a chance to organise a function when we arrived in Fremantle.

Chris Karl was the Captain at the time and I would have to say he was probably the best ship handler I had the pleasure to serve with. We believed that in berthing if we got more than six engine movements to berth he was having a bad day or the tugs were a problem. We berthed in Fremantle between two freighters, the CO only used four engine movements and when we got up top we discovered there was only about twenty feet ahead and astern of us to the berthed freighters, truly a magnificent display of ship handling.

The weekend in Fremantle was great, weather was fine and maximum leave was granted. First night we had a function in the mess, which was attended by a group from the Perth Hospital. I learnt that this was one of the downsides to having a Unit Ticket as I was duty and so couldn't drink. The other memory was we had a soccer game on the Sunday, I turned out for that and man did I suffer for the next few days at sea, it was not easy getting up and down ladders, I suppose I should have learn' prior to this that sport is great but one needs to be fit to participate.

So from Perth it was a long leg up to Singapore and the next stage.

*To be continued*

Take care

**Jerry Payne**

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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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