

HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INC

LONGCAST

12 June 20 – Navy Club Lunch – Remuera Club
19 June 20 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Howick RSA
10 July 20 – Navy Club Lunch – Remuera Club
17 July 20 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at New Lynn RSA

Hi Folks

CONGRATULATIONS NEW ZEALAND

We have all worked hard to be in a position to revert to Alert Level 1 tonight.

MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Our next Monthly Luncheon is scheduled to be held on 19th June 20 at the Howick RSA.

I have spoken to the manager at the Howick RSA and the Club has agreed to host our June lunch.

They have offered a two course carvery with a plated dessert for \$21.

To mark the occasion the Association will provide a door prize.

At 2359 tonight we will be reverted to Alert Level 1.

SHIP OF THE WEEK – HMNZS MONOWAI (1975)

HMNZS *Monowai* (A06) was a hydrographic survey vessel of the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN). Built in 1960, the ship was originally used as a civilian supply and passenger vessel by the New Zealand Government, under the name *GMV Moana Roa*, before being acquired by the RNZN in 1975. She remained in RNZN service until 1997, performing various duties such as coastal surveying, resupply,

and surveillance. After being decommissioned she was sold to civilian operators in Britain in 1998 for conversion to a cruise ship, but was found unsuitable for the role and eventually sent to Spanish shipbreakers in 2002.

The ship was laid down by Grangemouth Dockyard in Scotland in 1960. The ship displaced 3,900 tons at full load, was 90.8 metres (298 ft) in length overall and 82.3 metres (270 ft) long at the keel, had a beam of 14.1 metres (46 ft) and a draught of 5.2 metres (17 ft). Propulsion machinery consisted of two 7-cylinder two-stroke TAD 36 Clark Sulzer diesels, which provided 3,640 horsepower (2,710 kW) to the CP propellers. The ship had a top speed of 14 knots (26 km/h; 16 mph). In RNZN service, the ship had a crew of 126 and after 1980 was armed with two 20 mm Oerlikons for self-defence. In 1982, she was fitted out to carry a single Wasp helicopter.

After being completed, the vessel spent the first part of her operational life as the New Zealand Government Island supply/passenger vessel GMV *Moana Roa*. She was acquired by the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1975 and converted over a two-year period to replace her predecessor, HMNZS *Lachlan*. *Monowai* was the second of two ships with this name to serve in the RNZN. She was named after the glacial Lake Monowai. Monowai is a Māori word meaning "channel full of water".

During her naval service she was known as the "Ghost of the Coast", as she quietly remapped most of the New Zealand coastline including the Chatham, Campbell, and Auckland Islands, as well as the many sub-Antarctic islands in New Zealand's responsibility. She also acted as a resupply vessel carrying stores and equipment to Campbell and other sub-Antarctic islands and served as an "official residence" for VIPs and dignitaries at Pacific Island conferences.

Other tasks included monitoring Chinese missile splashdown tests, responding to the 1987 Fijian coups d'état to assist in the evacuation of New Zealand citizens, participating in the ANZCAN cable route survey, and assisting in international searches for sea mounts and shoals. She carried a helicopter and undertook rescue or aid missions, saving the lives of eight people during the New Zealand to Tonga Yacht Regatta.

Monowai was replaced in 1997 by HMNZS *Resolution*, formerly USNS *Tenacious*. She was sold to British buyers, Hebridean Island Cruises, for conversion into a cruise ship in 1998. She was laid up at Lowestoft in England after being found unsuitable for her intended use until 2002 when she was finally sent to Spanish shipbreakers.





MISSING DIVER RECOVERED

During the early hours of 19 June 1940 RMS *Niagara* struck two contact mines laid by the German Auxiliary Cruiser *Orion* six days previously.

The ship sank without loss of life, but 590 gold bars went down with the ship to a depth of 121m. In the following years divers contracted by Her Majesty's Treasury managed to recover all but five of the gold bars. Sadly, the sinking wouldn't be the last tragedy in the ship's history. On 15 March this year HMNZS *Wellington* responded to a Search and Rescue call in vicinity of the Hen and Chickens Islands, off the coast of Whangarei. Two civilian divers had descended toward the wreck and one had failed to return to the surface. Seven days later, following rough seas in the area, a detachment from HMNZS *Matataua* was tasked to aid Police in the search and recovery of the missing diver. While the rest of New Zealand were preparing to go into Level 4 Covid 19 lockdown, a team of six personnel from *Matataua*'s Clearance Dive Group with specialist Remote Operating Vehicle (ROV) equipment was deployed to Whangarei.

The depth and tidal conditions made this a very difficult and challenging job, but the seamless manner in which Police, Customs and HMNZS *Matataua* personnel worked together enabled the successful recovery of the missing diver, a colleague, a friend and a family member.

RNZN BAND ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

The Royal New Zealand Navy has been telling its story for 79 years. For 60 years, the Navy Band has charted the Navy's journey through music. So it falls to Music Director Lieutenant Commander Michael Dowrick to make sure that the 60th anniversary will be one to remember.

The revised date of the RNZN Band Anniversary Concert is currently Monday 19 October, 7pm at the Town Hall, Auckland.

LAUNDRYMAN DIES

A laundryman who served nearly forty years aboard Royal Navy and Royal New Zealand Navy vessels has been remembered for his selfless devotion to his work and family. Mow-Lam Cheung, originally from Hong Kong, worked as a Royal Navy laundryman from 1960, when Hong Kong laundrymen had contracts to serve the fleet based there. He worked on nine Royal Navy vessels before moving to New Zealand in 1984. He served as a civilian laundryman on board HMNZS *Southland* (1984 to 1989) and HMNZ Ships Canterbury, Waikato and Wellington from 1989 to 1997. He died on 24 April, aged 90, at North Shore Hospital with his son, Patrick Cheung, at his side – a concession from the hospital during COVID-19 lockdown. He was buried at Auckland Memorial Park, Silverdale.

RIVER PLATE VETERAN DIES

Ex POMEM Bob Batt was one of only two remaining River Plate veterans. He joined the Navy during a recruitment drive in Napier before the war. He was three days into service on HMS *Achilles* when war broke out and the ship changed course for the Atlantic to meet up with a British task force, in pursuit of German battleship *Admiral Graf Spee*. Mr Batt, who served for 15 years, remained active with the Royal New Zealand Navy and took part in the 75th River Plate anniversary events, the Navy's 75th anniversary and International Naval Review in 2016, and attended last year's Sailor of the Year celebrations at the Navy Museum.



Bob Batt and his great nephew Jonathan Bentin

PROPOSED HDML REUNION

HDML REUNION 2023 A reunion noting 80 years since the introduction of the Harbour Defence Motor Launches (HDML) is being mooted by enthusiasts and owners of the remaining 'fleet', for Easter Weekend 2023. The 16 HDML's were split between two Flotillas, 124th and 125th. They were painted dark grey, with some being painted white in 1950 as survey vessels. Many were given a black and white livery as Fisheries Protection vessels after 1960. Over the period from 1950 to 1984, many ML's (both ex Fisheries and Survey ML's) were used for other tasks and were stood down from active service, dispatched to the wreckers or sold privately. Many ML's during that period were seconded to the RNZNVR and located in the four main ports. As of 2012 there were still 10 ML's in private hands and in various states of repair. For more information on the reunion, or about all things HDML, email Thane Zander at nics_place@yahoo.com.



Kuparu and Paea

Regards

Jerry Payne

Editor

HMNZS Ngapona Assn

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