

HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

LONGCAST

6-8 April 18 - 75th Anniversary - HMNZS MOA Sinking

13 – 16 April 18 - HMNZS Otago and All ships Reunion, Poenamo Hotel, Auckland

14 April 18 – Book launch, 'Sailors Against the Odds' Ngataringa Sports Complex

20 April 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Onehunga RSA

25 April 18 – ANZAC Day

15 – 18 June 18 – Greenies Weapons Electrical Reunion at Napier

21 July 18 – HMNZS Ngapona Assn – Formal Dinner, Pt Chevalier RSA

Hi Folks

HMNZS OTAGO AND ALL SHIPS REUNION

Poenamo Hotel, Auckland, 13 - 16 April. Registration form attached.

ANZAC DAY PARADE 2018 - DNB

The Commanding Officer, HMNZS Ngapona, has extended an invitation to all 'Old Salts' to join with HMNZS NGAPONA on Anzac Day at HMNZS PHILOMEL memorial wall starting at 0730 through to 0830 to commemorate those who served.

On completion there will be light refreshments served in the Vince McGlone Galley.

Please advise your intention to attend by return email so numbers can be finalised.

I need names now so I can advise Ngapona!!

HMNZS NGAPONA ASSN - FORMAL DINNER 2018

The HMNZS Ngaona Assn will be holding its second Formal Dinner on 21 July 2018 at the Pt Chevalier RSA. The Dinner held in 2016 was very successful and this year we have another excellent Guest Speaker. Details to follow.....

Reservations are being accepted now, reply to this email with an expression of interest to ensure you do not miss out.

DID YOU KNOW?

On 8 April 2000 the 'Old Salt' trophy was initiated by Rear Admiral Fred Wilson on his retirement after serving for 41 years and 68 days, at the time the longest serving officer or rating. The trophy (actually an antique sterling silver sugar shaker) was then presented to Len Bilton who held it for over 13 years until he retired with nearly 53 years' service. His successor, Allen Mortimer, handed it over to Ray Jensen after 52 years' service.

A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 23

The day we left San Francisco we carried out a programmed full power trial. This is a requirement to confirm that the machinery plant is operating or capable of operating up to its designed full power. It always required a lot of setting up to ensure all the records were taken at the right time and from the right place. As Chief of the Watch there are a lot of things to ensure that they are happening and that the plant is being operated in a safe manner. This one didn't go to plan as we lost an extraction pump at full power. This sets off a series of issues and everything happens quickly. The main feed pump over sped from lack of water and straight away the water level in the boilers quickly drops, so one boiler is shut down immediately and the other you try and recover the water level. Effectively we went from around 30knots to stopped in the water in no time at all. This required extra work at the next port to try and work out why the extraction pump over sped.

The trip north apart from that excitement went as planned. Arriving in Seattle there were a few organised tours. One I went on was a visit to the Boeing factory. It was truly impressive. On arriving at the main gate we were amazed to see this wing being cranked up and down continuously, this was a check on the wing design and material as the wing experienced the same stresses as multiple take offs and landings. Walking into the assembly hangar it was absolutely stunning in size. There were 747's being assembled at the time and I think from memory there were six being assembled, one of which was for AirNZ. Seeing some of the development and design areas was truly amazing.

Vancouver was another great port to visit. Most of these ports you are actually berthed pretty much in or near the centre of town. Vancouver steam clock is a must visit for all steam engineers and so we all mustered there to watch it do its thing on the hour. It was then a couple of days at sea and then a weekend in Victoria, British Columbia. These ports being close together the time went quickly.

We left Victoria and travelled south with our next port of call Portland, Oregon. This was a challenging visit for a few reasons. The port itself is about forty miles up the Columbia River and sits astride this river and the Willamette River. The Columbia River runs at about 15 knots so to get up it we had revolutions rung on for about 24 knots to get up it. A pretty exciting exercise for the Navigator and needed intense concentration by Bridge Watch Keepers the whole way up. The other big issue was we had trouble with the evaporators. They are designed to operate in salt water and the river of course was fresh water and very cold.

While we were in Portland we had arranged to have a mess run, dinner ashore a few drinks. The WOMEA had agreed to do the duty, what a good guy. However unfortunately Mt St Helens decided to blow its top. When we came out from dinner you could hardly see in the street for the ash from the eruption. It was very surreal and when we got back to the ship we found they were unsure if we should sail directly as they were worried about the river becoming un-navigable. In the end we didn't sail but it was a pretty uncomfortable couple of days. The ship was covered in ash and it was through all the ventilation trunks. It was like a very fine grinding paste.

Sailing from Portland was also an experience. We were tied up in the Willamette River and we had to back out and immediately turn 180 degrees to head down river. As there was a bridge just astern of us and we had to turn quickly and try to remain in our place in the river or else we could have been jammed side on against the bridge with the current holding us there. Fortunately all went well and we were off down river. To maintain steerageway because of the normal flow of the river we were doing about 20 knots and it didn't take long to get out of the river and back into the ocean.

Next stop was San Diego; this huge Naval Base was an experience for all. There were so many ships in and always seemed to be something happening. We had a prime berth and was not far to the main gate. The usual trips to Disney Land and other amusement parks were organised. Disney Land of course was a must for most people and it certainly met all expectations. The only drawback was the holidays were on so there were queues at all the rides, so a lot of time was wasted waiting.

Kevin Bradley was by this time posted back to San Diego so we had our own driver and managed to get in some parties and visit various sorts of bars. Our favourite was a Country & Western Bar, very good music and a great atmosphere. One of the things in the Base was ships carrying out exercises at all hours of the day or night. One night walking back along the jetty we passed a fully blacked out US Ship carrying out a security exercise. There were armed guards all over it and I know we didn't feel comfortable walking in close proximity to young armed American Sailors.

We finally departed Mainland USA and headed for Hawaii on our way home. Midway between San D and Hawaii we were directed to a yacht in mid-ocean. The crew had overwhelmed the captain of the yacht as he had flipped his lid. We stood off for hours

while the Captain got direction from NZ on his legal position if he took the captain off the yacht. Finally he reluctantly agreed to transport the yacht captain to Hawaii.

He was brought on-board under duress and put in the sickbay under guard. Our Captain went down to see him and luckily the guards were able to overpower the gentleman when he flew at the Captain abusing the heck out of him. When we got to Hawaii there was difficulty getting anyone ashore interested in taking him off our hands, luckily, finally the Sheriff came down to the ship and took him away before we departed.

After a couple of days in Pearl Harbour and hasty last minute shopping we departed for the final long leg home. I had been advised that my posting ashore was programmed on arrival home. Just after we left Pearl Harbour the Captain had been advised that the ship would be home for two weeks of leave and essential maintenance and would then be deploying to Western Australia and thence the Red Sea.

Because of this change in plan the Captain advised the crew he had asked NZ to cancel all postings as he wanted to sail for this operation with his current crew which he believed was in an operational state. He didn't want to spend time working up a changed crew. As I had been at sea for five and a half years by this time I was not impressed.

After a bit of thought I finally decided to put in a request to see the Captain and request a married accompanied draft to Auckland New Zealand. I think they all thought it was a joke however I was deadly serious. I had done enough time away from my family and had indeed missed out on seeing a lot of milestones with the children growing up.

On presenting myself at the Captains Table and pleading my case the Captain agreed that he wouldn't stand in the way of my current scheduled posting to PHILOMEL. It was a huge relief and made the rest of the trip a lot more pleasant than it could have been. However in the past I had applied to undertake the Diesel Adqual Course in UK. I didn't have much hope at the time of getting it, mainly because most of these UK courses seemed to go to Artificers and not Mechanicians.

So about a week before arriving home I was advised I had been selected for the course and would be flying to UK about two weeks after arriving home and would be in UK for three months. This of course created a real dilemma for me. So on arrival home I had to break the news to Kerry. It wasn't the best time to have to do it. I suggested that she fly to Singapore in December and we could meet there and have a couple of days. John & Chris Pullin were stationed in Singapore and I knew they would love to have her stay with them. Kerry was initially reluctant as she was doing her 6th form certificate and needed it to progress to Teachers Training College in 1980.

So there was a fair bit of negotiating and even when I left to fly to UK I was unsure if she would be in Singapore to meet me on my way home. I was really of two minds if I should take up the course or decline it. I really wanted to do it career wise but really felt I needed to spend time at home and be a husband and father for a change. It was

probably the most difficult decision I have ever had to make. However Kerry stood by my decision to leave for the course and so off I went for another three months. In 1979 it meant I had been away from home for over ten months in total.

In looking back over these five and a half years I appreciate even more the fact that Kerry shouldered all the family responsibilities and I have just such great respect for her and all she did during this time especially.

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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