

HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

LONGCAST

8 June 18 – Navy Club Lunch at the Remuera Club
15 June 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Birkenhead RSA
15 – 18 June 18 – Greenies Weapons Electrical Reunion at Napier
23 June 18 – Northland Luncheon at Bay of Islands Yacht Club
30 June 18 – HMNZS Ngapona Senior Rates Mess Dinner
20 July 18 – Ngapona Assn Lunch at Pt Chevalier RSA
21 July 18 – HMNZS Ngapona Assn – Formal Dinner, Pt Chevalier RSA
17 August 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Henderson RSA
29 September 18 – Comms Assn AGM - Birkenhead RSA commencing at 1100

Hi Folks

END OF AN ERA - RETIREMENT OF CDR FRANK RANDS

(Posted on the Comms web site 24 May 2018)

Well. The time has come for me to leave the RNZN. Yes, tomorrow I walk out the door for the last time after handing in my ID Card, Car Pass etc. 52 years to the day completed in the service of my country and still not a 'VETERAN'.

I look forward to the NZDF reviewing the South East Asian service and the Far East Strategic Reserve service, although I would add, there is no one actually currently serving, who would have served during that time. I just left.

I wish all those currently serving all the very best for their careers and I look forward to joining my shipmates and fellow communicators in retirement.

Kind regards

Frank Rands

Congratulations and good luck for the future - Ed

DID YOU KNOW?

On June 6 1944, Lieutenant DJM (Dennis) Glover RNZNVR, in command of the Landing Craft LCI(S) 516 during the D-Day landings in Normandy, was awarded the DSC. He landed part of the 6th Commando Brigade at the port of Ouistreham, part of the Sword Beach objective. He then rescued 233 soldiers from the sinking LCI(L) 130 and landed them, before going to the assistance of the sinking LCI(S) 517 and recovered her crew before it sank.

After WWII, Denis Glover returned to Christchurch where he joined the Canterbury division of the Naval Reserve and spent a good deal of his time in its post war reformation. He served in HMNZ Ships BELLONA, KIWI and LACHLAN, and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander before retiring. He was also a well known poet, author and publisher.

A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 31

So on an overcast Monday morning we departed Portsmouth for home. Unfortunately the ship like its namesake city seemed to invite inclement weather. We arrived into the English Channel and as we transitioned west the weather deteriorated even further. It was a very uncomfortable passage through the Bay of Biscay with strong winds and heavy seas.

Our first port of call for fuel was a stop at the Azores. This was purely a fuel stop and was only a matter of hours to fuel and leave with the next stop scheduled at Port Canaveral in Florida, USA. The trip from Azores to Port Canaveral was in reasonable weather and with no exercises gave the crew time to take stock of the ship and continue the list of tasks that would be required in the upcoming refit.

Our arrival in Port Canaveral was a welcome time to have a few days of rest and relaxation. When the helicopter had flown on in Portsmouth it was promptly pushed into the hangar and there it was programmed to stay. However there was a decision that the ship would be open to visitors.

To give the ship maximum exposure it was decided to turn the helicopter around so it faced out towards the flight deck. The hangar door went up and the two Flight Sargent's with help manoeuvred the helicopter out, turned it around in preparation for the Open Day.

As they piped leave the Flight were closing the hangar door and it jammed half way down. All of a sudden it became an engineering problem and the Air Force went ashore. As can be well imagined this did not endear their attitude to me, however we managed to free up the door.

That night there was a Cocktail Party on the flight deck. The Warrant Officers were not invited so most of the crew not duty headed ashore to keep out of the way. A bunch of us engineering types ended up in a nightclub called aptly "The Mousetrap". We had

been there some hours when the Wardroom lead by the Jimmy arrived in company with young ladies they had met at the cocktail party.

You could sense instantly what was going to happen. It was a challenge to see how many of these young ladies could be prised away from their escorts. The outcome from this was that the next day the MEO sent for me as he had been told that the Jimmy was furious about the events of the night before and wanted to stop the Engineering Department leave. After a rather heated discussion this didn't happen but it certainly didn't endear him to the branch.

There were trips arranged and I was lucky enough to participate in a day trip to Cape Canaveral, as it was then, and a tour of both the museum there and the launch sites. It was certainly an eye opener, as I don't think any of us realised just how big some of the rockets were compared to the size of the space modules, they were like a pimple on the elephants a---e.

After a weekend in Port Canaveral we departed and sailed south in increasingly hot weather. It was one night on this transit that I got a shake about 0200 and informed that the Stoker doing rounds had shut down on air conditioning compressor as he said it just didn't sound normal. I got down there and ran it up noting that something did sound different so the Chief of the section was roused out of his pit.

The decision was made to remove the heads off the compressor to check valves and pistons. Luckily we did as we found one piston was just starting to bind on the liner. If the unit had been left running it would have pretty much destroyed the compressor and would have been unable to be rebuilt. Managing to muster all the parts required the compressor was rebuilt and put back into service.

Anyone that has transited through the tropics would appreciate the availability of both air conditioning units, as only one unit running does not keep the ship internally cool. The young guy that stopped the unit was duly praised for his action and it just highlighted one of my long held theories that no matter how young and inexperienced the crew may be they all deserve to be listened to as every now and again what they have heard or seen can bail you out of a potential tricky situation.

We arrived off the end of the Panama Canal early in the morning. It was fascinating as in the dark you could see the navigation lights of ships coming down through the locks on the Colon side of the canal. It gave a really good idea of the height we were to be raised to get to the lakes before being lowered again on the west side to the Pacific Ocean.

However there was an issue when we arrived, no one had paid the fees for us to transit the canal. This was interesting as I said to the MEO we couldn't hang around at anchor for too long, as we were getting low on fuel. Fortunately one of the local Brokers stumped up with the down payment so we up anchored and entered the first of the locks. There are three locks at each end of the canal and the ship is raised about

30mtrs up the hill to a set of lakes and then to the other end were another three locks lower you down to the Pacific Ocean.

It is a truly strange experience as you get into the lock and the water is admitted you can actually see the ship rising. The other thing was that there are line handlers put on board for the trip through the locks. You could purchase anything off them, watches, radios and drugs, nothing was forbidden. Coming out of the third lock there is a long steam through the lake system before arriving at the descending locks at the other end.

It was really hard to imagine some of the hardships that the workers endured building the canal, some of the cuttings you could see were large and the conditions with the heat and humidity must have been terrible. It was strange to think you were steaming through a fresh water lake and crossing the middle of a continent.

We successfully negotiated the canal and stopped overnight at the US Navy Base at the western end. Leave was granted but as the MEO had a function to go to he required me to stay on board whilst we were auxiliary alongside. This didn't please me as I was hoping to go into Panama City with a bunch of the guys. Never mind I guess it came with the job.

We left the Canal Zone and steamed north. We called into Manzanillo, Mexico for fuel. This is again a day fuel stop although some of the crew did manage to get ashore for a few hours. We left Manzanillo and transited north to San Diego. The night after we left Manzanillo they were subjected to a huge storm and a landslide came down burying some of the town. Just as well we left when we did.

We arrived in San Diego and a good berth not far from the PX. This was a time to ensure all the Rabbits were purchased for those left at home. There were RPC'S laid on for the crew and we were made to feel really welcome.

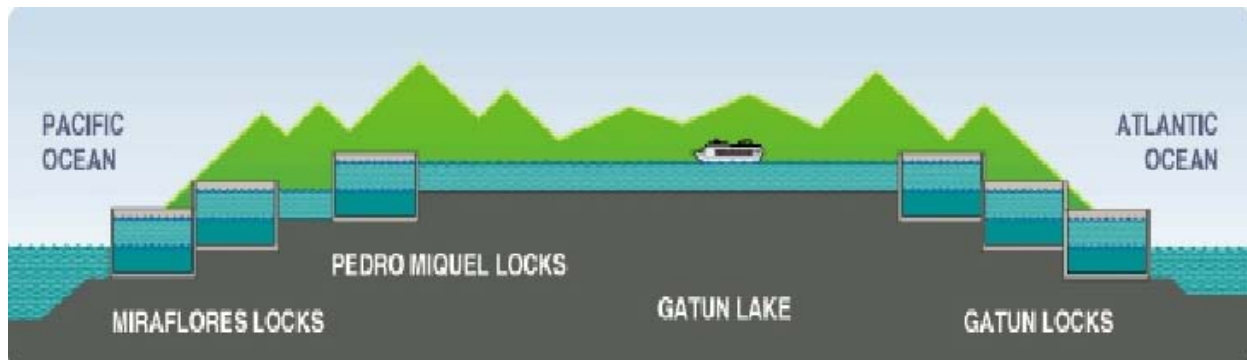
I knew that my American Navy mate was away on deployment as part of a Westpac fleet, I knew he had re-married but didn't know his wife had been waiting for me to call. As I had never met her I never even gave it a thought and this was to be rectified a couple of years later.

After a weekend in San Diego we sailed for Pearl Harbour. These passages were long and pretty boring as we were just cruising at 12-14 knots and a straight passage from A to B. One of the differences from WELLINGTON to CANTERBURY was that at the back of the Senior Rates Dining Hall there was an escape hatch from the Aft CPO's sleeping space. The watch keepers had grabbed this space, as there was a watertight door between the sleeping space and the rest of the Aft CPO's Mess hence the reason for the escape hatch into the dinning hall.

I discovered the best way to rouse my Senior Rates was to make cups of coffee and then bang on the escape hatch whence when it was open I gave the guys their morning coffee. This ensured that they were awake and would be up to organise the required work for the day.

Pearl Harbour was another short stop for a couple of days then it was off on the long leg home. When we sailed from Pearl we were accompanied by a tanker, this was to ensure that we could steam to Pago Pago safely, this was caused as I have indicated prior by our high fuel expenditure. Unfortunately we ran into foul weather almost as soon as we left and the planned fuel transfer was delayed until the better weather the next day, then we were on our own for the next ten days down to Pago Pago.

To be continued



Panama Canal - graphic display of locks



Cocoli's locks - Panama Canal

Take care

Jerry Payne

Editor@ngapona.org.nz

021 486 013

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."

(To be removed from this email list please reply to this email with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line.)