



HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

LONGCAST

19 January 18 – Ngapona Assn Lunch at Swanson RSA
16 February 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Manurewa RSA
16 March 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Waiheke RSA
13 – 16 April 18 - HMNZS Otago and All ships Reunion, Poenamo Hotel,
Auckland

Hi Folks

SEASONS GREETINGS

I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas Day and Santa was kind to you. If you are on leave, have a safe and happy holiday.

NGAPONA ASSN WEB SITE

I promised that our web site would be live by Christmas. I am pleased to advise that our web site is now up and running. There are still some finishing touches to do and we are waiting for Google to add it to their search engine. Please paste into your browser 'www.ngapona.org.nz' (negative quotes) to access the site. I would welcome your feedback and any suggestions for improvement.

EX HMNZS KUPARU

The HDML ex HMNZS Kuapru was relaunched last Tuesday. The launching was to be featured on TV3 6:00pm news tonight but obviously got bumped for something more

important. My apologies to everyone who watched the news right to the end. I will let you know when it is due to be aired.





A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 9

Hong Kong was a place I just loved. It for me had more life and was exciting. It was I think the colour and the sheer number of people, it always seemed busy no matter what hour of the morning you were out and about. We arrived alongside and to have shore power was always a blessing for the engine room branch.

Whilst we were here I took part in a trip to the Shatin Valley. This was a ferry over to Kowloon then a small bus with about fifteen of us I think. We travelled through the New Territory, which was part of the Hong Kong protectorate. Again the sheer number of people in Kowloon was mind boggling for this green kiwi. We went out of Kowloon to the Shatin Valley and we were able to look over the border into the real China. Was not much to see really as the border was delineated by a river and was notable for the great area of paddy fields on the other side. However it was still good to know I had been and seen.

At the time I didn't know that forty two years later I would visit Hong Kong and go by train from there to Beijing. As well as spend three weeks in China, which of course was deemed "The Enemy" in 1970.

There were nights in Night Clubs, various visits to notable sights. The cable car to the top of Mt Victoria where there was a great view of Hong Kong Island and across the harbour to Kowloon. We went to Aberdeen Harbour one night for dinner at a floating restaurant. This was a novel experience and was an interesting night especially the trip

back ashore by sampan after a few (many) beers. However we made it safely. It was just astonishing to see the floating villages of sampans and the number of young children on them.

During the first part of the deployment I was living in 3Dz mess, which was right up fwd. of the 4.5 gun. It was a small mess with nine of us steamies on the port side and nine SA's on the stbd side. The centre space was taken up by the sonar trunk so they were two separate messes and usually quiet.

Unfortunately while we were here in Hong Kong a typhoon warning was received so we were told to sail and ride it out at sea. It was not a great experience, especially living up fwd. like we were the ship was pitching quite violently, this was very tiring as to go anywhere on the ship was a real effort to keep your balance and this was very tiring. The best place was to be in your bunk. However as almost predictable one of the turbo generators failed so we had to run a diesel generator.

The diesel generators were even further fwd. than our mess, as a safety and health issue instead of our usual four hour watch we were only rostered on up there for two hours. Luckily the fwd. junior rates heads were just aft of the diesel room and it would be debatable as to where some of us spent the most time during our watch. We also had to pump up the diesel header tank by hand pump, this was also a test as the ship would drop off a wave and you would get this horrible sinking feeling as the ship plunged down into the trough before climbing up the next wave. It was not a great experience but an experience to be had anyway and another thing I could sign off in the been there done that and survived.

I had passed my Command Exam prior to joining the ship and early in the deployment sat and passed my Professional Exam for Leading Hand. Having been an ME1 for four years I still had to go on the roster for LM(E). In those days the roster was a long list and dependant on your points and position on the roster your promotion could be some time in arriving, it was not a finite date. Being an ME1 with full Auxiliary Watchkeeping Certificate (AMC) meant that for the whole trip I was basically on the watchbill. Either four watches at sea, 24 about in harbour and unfortunately even in Singapore being the Duty Driver I spent the whole deployment from memory with a maximum of one day off at any one time.

The other notable thing about being in Hong Kong was the shopping. We very early on discovered that there were bargains galore, but the prices skyrocketed when the American ships came in. Was also interesting that the bar girls also transferred their allegiance the minute the Yanks arrived. Yes like today money did talk and poorly paid Kiwi's were suddenly not the currency of the day.

We departed Hong Kong and went back to Singapore. Singapore seemed a bit drab and slow after Hong Kong, however again the shopping was good and the sports at TERROR were great to either participate in or watch. During this time we also went with the fleet to Pulau Tioman, this was a common stopping off point for the fleet in the

middle of fleet exercises. The fleet would go to anchor and there would be a sports day ashore on the beach. This was a very competitive day and a lot of the sailors came back with bumps and bruises, however there was a lot of good cheer and camaraderie formed from this exercise.

We also spent a day at sea with HMS TRIUMPH for their family day. TRIUMPH was the alongside repair ship in Singapore and only went to sea for a day here and there. It was interesting doing RAS exercises with them and watching the young ladies on TRIUMPH waving to their Kiwi beau's, it was also noted that some of the married ladies were surreptitiously acknowledging some of the Kiwi's as well.

We then transited back up to Hong Kong. Notable for this visit was the testing off our gas masks. On the end of the jetty was a bunker, probably left over from the Second World War or before. We were put in the bunker with our gas masks and they then inserted tear gas to test our masks. At the end you had to take your mask off and experience the delights of tear gas. It is very effective especially in a confined space like the bunker so we were all pleased when the door was opened and we could get out into the fresh air with our eyes streaming. It was worse if you rubbed your eyes so it was a matter of just allowing the breeze to get rid of the gas along with copious quantities of tears as well.

We then left Hong Kong for Taiwan (Nationalist China). Taiwan was still on a war footing with invasion expected at any time from across the water Mainland China. We entered Kao Hsiung, which was a major port on the southern end of Taiwan. It was immediately notable for the radar and anti-aircraft batteries on the hills surrounding the harbour. This was also an experience of a very busy crowded Commercial Harbour. There seemed to be ships everywhere and they were berthed two or three ships side by side.

We had had a pretty intense briefing before arrival. There were places we could go and those we shouldn't. Also there was a curfew from 0100 from memory and we were told to be caught on the streets at that hour was not a good option. We went ashore and almost immediately on going outside the base gates there were two lovely ladies attached to your arm. This seemed great but we soon became aware that we weren't really the attraction they just wanted us to get them into the American Base Club, again the American dollar ruled.

We made an error of judgement and on the way back to the ship we unfortunately failed to get into the base before 0100. So we were immediately told to stay where we were, we were just across the road from the base gate and could see the ship. However we weren't going to argue with an armed soldier whom only seemed to converse by pointing a gun at us, so the Kiwi Heroes said "Yes Sir No Sir three bags full Sir and sat down on the pavement for the next five hours.

Luckily we were only here for a weekend as it was an uncomfortable feeling the whole time with the perceived war threat sort of hanging over the area. At the end of this visit we sailed on our way to Japan and Expo 70 which was probably the major focus of the whole deployment.

To be continued.

CNS #27

Rear Admiral Jack Steer RNZN ONZM,

Chief of Navy: 30 November 2012 to 30 November 2015

Rear Admiral Jack Steer was born in Christchurch, New Zealand. He joined the Royal New Zealand Navy on 3 January 1973 as a midshipman, specialising as a seaman officer. As a young officer he served on Her Majesty's New Zealand Ships TAUPO, WAIKATO and OTAGO before taking his first command post as the Officer in Command of HMNZS HAWEA.

Following the completion of his Principle Warfare Officer training in the United Kingdom, Rear Admiral Steer was posted to HMNZ Ships OTAGO and SOUTHLAND in the positions of Weapons Control Officer and Operations Officer.

Between June and December 1988 Rear Admiral Steer completed staff training at the Royal Australian Naval Staff College. On his return to New Zealand he was posted to Naval Staff as Deputy Director of Underwater Warfare. In November 1989 he was posted to HMNZS SOUTHLAND as the Executive Officer and in May the following year was appointed Executive Officer in HMNZS WELLINGTON.

In July 1991 Rear Admiral Steer was promoted to Commander. He completed the Joint Services Staff Course in Australia and was appointed to the staff of the Australian Defence Force Warfare Centre in Williamstown, Australia. In December 1994 he took command of HMNZS WELLINGTON, which successfully contributed to the Multinational Interception Force operations in the Arabian Gulf, enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq. In mid-1996 he was appointed as the Fleet Operations Officer at Maritime Headquarters.

Rear Admiral Steer was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 1995 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

In December 1998 he was appointed Military Adviser to the Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations, in New York. On completion of this posting in 2003 he undertook the Defence and Strategic Studies course at CDSS, Canberra and gained his MA in Strategic Studies.

He was appointed Chief of Staff at Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand in January 2003 and on promotion to Commodore in April 2004, was appointed as Maritime Component Commander. In January 2005, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Navy following which he was promoted to Rear Admiral and took up the position as Commander Joint Forces New Zealand in May 2006

Rear Admiral Steer was appointed Vice Chief of Defence Force in February 2008 and during his tenure has been fully engaged in the largest reform programme ever undertaken by a New Zealand Government department.

On 25 October 2012, he was appointed as the Chief of Navy and took up the position on 30 November 2012.

On 25 November 2017 he was awarded the Legion of Merit (Degree of Commander)



Take care

Jerry Payne

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President

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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