



THE CLAYMORE

HMNZS OTAGO ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



#68 August 2009

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"IT IS SAD TO GROW OLD, BUT NICE TO RIPEN"

Hi Men,

As I write this the Sun is shining; a welcome change after what has been a very cold wet winter, and dare I say, it felt that much colder as we get a bit older - something like the "wind chill factor" called the "age chill factor", but summer "is a coming" and as Mother Nature always makes a counter balance, it will be a good one (I hope).

2009 REUNION - Well what can I say apart from everyone seemed to really enjoy themselves? There were a few things we could have done a little better - hindsight is a wonderful tutor, but overall it was a great success. Initially, I had a few trepidations about the venue, but overall it was a really enjoyable weekend get-together. I was also concerned about the "Church Service" (Charismatic Christian) but it turned out to be a relaxed, happy, joyous affair. As one member said "Hare Krishna's next year"!

The food was good with plenty of it, and the dinner on Saturday night turned out to be hilarious with classic Dits and Stories. Thanks to Hooky Walker, Graham Cooke and lots of others who joined in, which begs the question, why keep these bottled up - send them to us to put in the Claymore and the website to share with us all. "Come on, let's be 'aving yer'" as Cheifie used to say.

The AGM was held on Saturday, in the Motel "Wharenu" (which also serves as a Chapel), and the incumbent Committee was re-elected.

Gary Cousins of the Taranaki Association gave a talk on the subject of combined/joint reunions after which "up Spirits" was piped, with appropriate medicine being donated by ex Chief Cook Pincher Martin. Bless him.

Everyone was given a souvenir Pen and an ID Card/Key holder necklet courtesy of John and Juanita Bass. Thanks to them again.

As I foretold, the Sunday Church Service, in the "Wharenu", was somewhat different to what we are accustomed, but nevertheless was very enlightening and the Pastor gave a really humorous and enjoyable sermon.

The highlight of this Service, for me, was to hear the Naval Hymn for which there was no musical accompaniment (we found out it is called singing 'Acappella'), but which you didn't just "sing" you "roared" it out, and very melodious too - Just magic. Regretfully, when the Pastor questioned me as to whether we had taken any Liquor in to the "Wharenu" the previous day, I had to tell him a little white lie and explain to him that it was a centuries old Naval Tradition and Custom, say like "Naval Communion Wine", and with a knowing wink he said he was happy with that Corollary or at least I think that's what he said.

2010 REUNION - Although it is still early days the Reunion Committee in Dunedin are working away on our behalf and some bookings have already been made. What nobody can control is the weather so let us hope that June 2010 will be better than it

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was this year. However, the last Reunion we had in Dunedin in June 1996 it snowed a little on the "glorious 1st of June" but did not interfere with the program, and they have a "Plan B" all organised anyway.

The Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral A J Parr (MVO) has kindly accepted our invitation to be the Keynote Speaker at the Reunion Dinner which is presently planned to take place in Forbury Park. We have also asked for the Navy Band and the HMNZS Otago to be present, but this may not be possible – time will tell.

Later this year, when we have a better idea of costs, program, etc. we will send out a Registration Form and put it on the website, together with a list of suggested Motels/Hotel accommodation. The attendance is limited to 300. Preference will be given to members, but serving and retired members of the RNZN will be made welcome

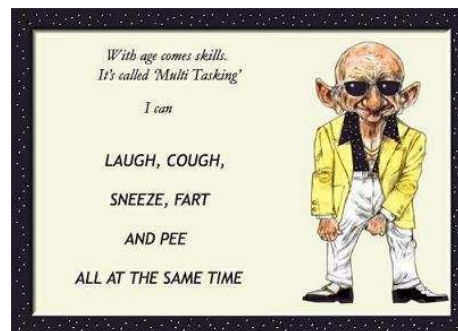
GET TOGETHERS - The initial success of these "Mini Reunions" has waned, and the last couple have been poorly supported, possibly due to the lousy weather, and we will have a review of the concept.

MEDALS - The NZDF questionnaire about the proposed new medal has closed and the submissions are being analysed, with the possibility of some information becoming available before the end of September. After finalisation of this Medal project, it is probable that this same Committee will review "Service in South East Asia" and that there will eventually be a determination of exactly what constitutes "Operational Service".

FINANCES - Our finances remain in a very healthy state thanks to the prudent management of our Secretary/Treasurer who puts in an incredible number of hours work on our behalf.

NEW HMNZS OTAGO P148 - Elsewhere in this Claymore there is an article updating the situation. Our thanks are due to the Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Simon Rooke RNZN for this. Sadly the Grim Reaper continues to take his toll, and we send our condolences to the relatives and friends of our shipmates who have recently "Crossed the Bar". Finally, thank you again to the Committee and their Ladies and to you our Members for all your support to our vibrant Association. Every Kind wish,

Jim Blackburn. BEM
President.



Did you know it's a sin for a woman to make coffee?
Yes, it's in the Bible. It says. . . . 'He brews'.

Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?
Because Noah was standing on the deck.

The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible. *Arthur C Clarke*

NZ Defence Force Facts and Figures 2009

Total NZDF Personnel Including Reservists & Civilians 14,734

Navy	2987	20%
Army	7499	51%
Air Force	3235	22%
HQNZDF (Civilians)	1103	7%

Total NZDF Personnel by employment status 14,734

Regular Force	9745	66%
Reserve Force	2303	6%
Civilians	2686	18%

Gender Breakdown
Male 83% Female 17%

NZDF Median age by Service

Navy	26.6 years
Army	26.5 years
Air Force	31.0 years
NZDF Regular Force	27.6 years

Total Navy Personnel	2897
Regular Force	2148 74%
Reserve Force	331 12%
Civilian	478 14%

Gender Breakdown
Male 77% Female 23%

Total Army Personnel	7499
Regular Force	4988 67%
Reserve Force	1772 24%
Civilian	739 9%

Gender Breakdown
Male 87% Female 13%

Total Air Force Personnel	3235
Regular Force	2609 81%
Reserve Force	200 6%
Civilian	426 13%

Gender Breakdown
Male 82% Female 18%

Update on the "new" OTAGO - P148

by Lt Cdr Simon Rooke, RNZN – Commanding Officer (Desig).

The Navy's preparations to accept OTAGO, the first of the two Offshore Patrol Vessels, are in full swing. At present the "new" OTAGO is undergoing final preparations for acceptance and I expect this to occur by December this year. The final work being undertaken includes, amongst other activity, installation of new boats (the Zodiac J3 RHIB is in high demand from both RNZN and RAN so there has been a queue at the factory door!) and setting the 16 tonne stern crane to work.

Once the Acceptance Date is confirmed, I will be taking a delivery crew to Melbourne to conduct training, a sea safety check and then bring OTAGO to New Zealand. After OTAGO is delivered to Devonport, it is currently planned for the majority (stand fast a small Duty Watch organisation) of us to immediately return to Melbourne to accept OTAGO's sister ship, WELLINGTON. This will be a shorter process however, as we will have learned our craft in OTAGO. While this is occurring, OTAGO will undertake a period of installing Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) such as computer hardware, security systems and specific communications related equipment. As soon as WELLINGTON is delivered to Devonport, OTAGO will be manned by the Commissioning Ship's Company, who will take her through the Introduction Into Service. This will include Commissioning; Completing GFE installation; Harbour Training; Ceremonial visits to Dunedin and Bluff; Sea Trials; Work Up, and; Ship Open to Visitors/ Guided Tours.

As members of the OTAGO Association reading this update will have noticed there is an important event that I have not mentioned – hosting an OTAGO Association Meeting onboard. Please be assured that I have not overlooked my responsibilities and I look forward to requesting, through the Association President, to host an OTAGO Association meeting onboard the 'new' OTAGO.

Regards,

Simon Rooke

Lt Cdr, RNZN
Commanding Officer (Desig) OTAGO



The Skipper's Barge

SMALL DEEDS DONE ARE BETTER THAN GREAT DEEDS PLANNED.

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STOP PRESS!



Due to the shortage of calico sea trials for the Otago have again be delayed.



On Tuesday 18 August the Remote Operating Vehicle (ROV) operating from the Royal New Zealand Navy Diving Tender, HMNZS MANAWANUI formally identified the sunken vessel discovered on 12 August on the seabed as the PRINCESS ASHIKA.

The ROV identified the vessel by reading the name plate. The water clarity is reported to be very good and this has allowed the team to conduct a good, thorough search of the sunken vessel. One side of the PRINCESS ASHIKA is obstructed and the ROV is unable to see into the passenger compartment. The vessel is sitting flat on the seabed and appears to be intact.

The ROV has been able to enter the cargo hold and is providing information to the Transport Accident Investigation Commission Investigator. The images attached were gathered during the RNZN ROV mission yesterday and have been released with the permission of the Prime Minister of Tonga.

Please remember every old shoe box stored in the attic could hold a potential treasure chest of history. Once thrown away, these snapshots of history are lost forever.