

HMNZS OTAGO – Potted History

(Note: I have started a new “commission” on change of operational C.O.)

First Commission C.O. Cdr Max McDowell Commissioned Southampton (Thorneycrofts) 22 June 1960.

June – November '61– U.K.waters:- harbour and sea trials Portsmouth, Portland; shakedown incl visits to Guernsey and Copenhagen; full workup Portland; exercises with conventional and nuclear submarines Londonderry; berthed Pool of London – visit by patron Princess Margaret.

17 Nov. '60 - sailed London for New Zealand – via Gibraltar, Malta (ASW exercises), Suez, Aden, Singapore (ASW exercises and Christmas), Fremantle (New Year 1961), Melbourne, Stewart Island, to arrive Dunedin on 19 Jan. '61.

January – August '61– N.Z.waters – Auckland, Waitangi (with Aust & Canadian navies), main leave, cruise – Napier, Wellington, Auckland and Whangarei areas – exercise with RN submarines and Aust ships and RNZAF, Wellington (guard for opening of Parliament), Auckland (routine docking, trials and shakedown).

8 Aug – Sep '61. To Brisbane – major exercise Coral sea with (12 plus) RAN and RN ships and submarines..”Tuckerbox” and returned to Wellington (Naval staff to sea), then Auckland for leave and maintenance.

19 Oct '61– sailed with ROYALIST – Sydney area..exercises with RAN ships and RN submarines and aircraft; Nov '61to Melbourne – inspections, Melbourne Cup; exercises Jervis Bay; then

Dec. and January '62: Auckland...exercises in Hauraki Gulf; 6 Feb '62 Waitangi ceremony i/c TARANAKI, LACHLAN, HMAS GASCOYNE.

Second Commission C.O. Cdr John McKenzie vice McDowell - 8 February 1962.

10 Feb – sailed for “Jet” exercises..to Singapore via Townsville, Darwin and Lombok, Sapoedi and Carimata straits without Indonesian interference; 26 Feb – 2 March Singapore; to 24 March: “Jet” in Bay of Bengal with RN units; continued in Lankawi and washup in Singapore. 24 March – 13 April: passage to Auckland via Soenda Str, Christmas Id, Fremantle and Hobart.

May, June, July, August recommissioned to mid-September '62 Long - refit (Seacat) and trials Auckland. mid-Sep to mid Oct – to Aust – shakedown Jervis Bay and return NZ for shopwindow Wgtn, Auckex leave, short refit and Seacat trials Auckland..to 20. January 1963.

Jan to April 1963. Escort Royal Yacht and short cruise:-Suva, Lautoka, Waitangi, Tauranga, Wellington, Nelson, Dunedin Auckland (Auckex TAPIR and ROTOITI).

1 April to 16 December 1963 – Pacific & S.E.Asia deployment:-Apl/May to Pearl Harbour via Suva and workup P.H. Thence to Singapore via Kwajalein and Guam. June 63 – in dock in Singapore.

Third Commission

C.O. Cdr Ted Thorne vice McKenzie - 4 July 1963

To 27 August continued S.E.Asia deployment..Singapore area, maintenance, trials and visit (Hongkong) with RN carrier and RAN escort. Oct/Nov visits Hongkong, Bangkok then maintenance in Singapore. 23 Nov to 16 Dec. return to Auckland via Fremantle and Adelaide.

December '63 to May '64: Second refit and trials Auckland. June/July – exercises Auckland, Deep Freeze flight duties, visits Nelson, Dunedin,Wellington.

21 July 1964 to 26 May 1965 – Pacific & S.E.Asia deployment:-To 28 Sep '64– to Pearl Harbour via Suva and Pago Pago – workup, collision and repairs.

Oct to December '64 passage to Singapore via Midway and Guam; exercises and patrols; visits Koh Samuie, Bangkok, Hongkong, Paluan, Sipidan and Tawau

Fourth Commission

C.O. Cdr Rick Humby vice Thorne 19 December 1964

Christmas '64 – Singapore. Jan '65 exercises Subic Bay and off Okinawa with RN carrier

Feb to May – Singapore area – maintenance, exercises, patrols; visits to Hongkong, Langkawi, Port Swetenham.

May'65 – passage to Auckland via Labuan and Manus.

To February 1966 – N.Z.waters; June/July Auckland leave and exercises; Aug visits: Wellington, Lyttleton, Bluff, Great Barrier;

Aug '65 to Jan '66 –short refit, trials & shakedown Auckland.

7 February to 12 September 1966 – Pacific & S.E.Asia deployment:

To 17 Feb '66– to Pearl Harbour via Pago Pago;

Feb – April at Pearl Harbour and visits Kailuia Bay and Hilo.

April to 2 May to Singapore via Midway, Guam, Labuan; to

28 August '66: based Singapore area – visits Manila, Bangkok, Pulau Tioman, Hongkong; Maintenance, exercises with RN carrier and patrols.

28 Aug to 12 Sep – passage to Auckland via Darwin, Townsville.

Long Refit 12 September 1966 to 25 October 1967.

4 October 1966..Refit C.O. Cdr John Washbourne (Q.H.M.) vice Humby.

25 October 1967 Commenced post-refit trials

Fifth Commission

C.O. Capt Dick Hale vice Washbourne 15 December 1967

To 26 March 1968 : Tests, sea trials and calibrations mainly Auckland but also Sydney; Waitangi guardship.

26 March to 12 December 1968 – Pacific &.Asia deployment:- to

4 April: to Pearl Harbour via Raoul and Pago Pago; to

30 May: P.H. workup, training and exercise ORE.; to

20 June passage to Singapore via Midway, Guam, Labuan.

June to November 1968 – continued Asia deployment based on Singapore:

July/August: Singapore area, exercise “Slug Pie”, visits Tumpat, Bangkok, Pulau Redang, Pulau Babir Besar, Pulau Tioman, Jason Bay.

Sept/Oct – visits to Hongkong, Sasebo, Chinhae, Inchon; Nov, Singapore area.

28 Nov to 12 December 1968: Passage to Auckland via Darwin, Port Moresby, Honiara, Suva, Raoul Id.

13 December '68 to 23 February 1969– Auckland – leave, trials; Waitangi guard ship.

Sixth Commission

C.O. Cdr Tom Riddell vice Hale 24 February 1969.

26 Feb to mid-March '69: visited Sydney for command team training; thence drills Hauraki Gulf;

21 Apl to 27 May '69: work up and exercises based on Sydney.

27 May to 6 October 1969:- Asian deployment:

27 May sailed Sydney for Singapore via Cairns and Darwin; July: Singapore and area – Pulau Tioman; August '69:-Visits Hongkong, Yokosuka, Maizuru (**rode out typhoon “Cora”**), Hongkong again. Sept: sea and harbour inspections;

24 Sept to 6 October '69: Returned to Auckland via Carimata, Sapudi, Wetar and Torres Straits, Great Barrier Reef and Whitsunday Passage.

Periodic Refit 6 October 1969 to March 1970.

18 January 1970 Refit C.O. Cdr Joe Quinn (QHM) vice Riddell

To 25 May '70: Harbour and sea trials and leave – Auckland.

Seventh Commission

C.O. Cdr Ian Tyler vice Quinn 26 May 1970

To 15 June: Continued trials and shakedown Auckland area.

June 1970 to December 1971 – Deployment to Pacific and Asia, with brief return to Auckland and Sydney January 1971.

15 June to 24 July '70 passage to Pearl Harbour via Raoul and Pago Pago – work up at P.H.

24 Jul to 25 Oct '70: passage to Hongkong; thence based Singapore with visits to Port Swettenham and Penang and **emergency docking for sonar dome repair.**

To 19 Dec '70 Visits to Subic Bay, Nagasaki, Keelung and Hongkong.

19 December 1970 – sailed Singapore, passage to Auckland via Townsville, Darwin and Bay of Islands – arrived

1 January 1971. 18 Jan – sailed for Sydney and exercises “mini war” in Sydney areas to

6 March 1971:- sailed Sydney to resume overseas deployment. - to 29 March to Manila via Fremantle and Singapore; April/May '71: based Singapore area – exercises and docking.

June '71: Visits Subic Bay, Hongkong, Pusan, Hakodate, Sasebo, Buckners Bay;

July/August local exercises Singapore, visit to Hongkong (self maintenance).

Sept/Oct '71:- TWO assisted maintenance periods Singapore; otherwise exercises in Singapore areas and Sunda Strait with RN units including **final steam past** of Far Eastern Fleet;

17 November to 10 December 1971:- passage to Auckland via Fremantle, Hobart and Dunedin.

Short Refit – December 1971 to June 1972.

Eighth Commission.

C.O. Cdr Allan Tyrrell vice Tyler 4 April 1972

To Aug '72 Harbour and sea trials Auckland area

7 August 1972: passage to Pearl Harbour via Pago Pago;

19 Aug – 30 Sep '72: at Pearl Harbour – work up and exercises;

30 Sep: passage to Sydney via Pago Pago and Suva;

13 Oct to 5 Nov: Sydney, exercises;

6 November 1972 to 15 January 1973: passage to Auckland – exercise and leave period.

15 January to 19 April 1973:- deployment to S.E.Asia; to

31 Jan – passage to Singapore via Brisbane and Darwin;

Feb: based Singapore – visits Hongkong and Penang;

March: bases Singapore – exercises with Malaysian Navy, and patrols;

2 to 19 April: passage Singapore to Auckland via Darwin and Cairns.

19 April to 28 June '73: at Auckland – leave, sea trials and exercises, visits to Napier and Bounty Islands.

28 June to 2 August 1973: passage to and from, and witness at **Mururoa (French nuclear testing)**

Ninth Commission

C.O. Cdr Cedric Steward vice Tyrrell 27 August 1973

To 12 Nov '73: Auckland area – exercises, trials, leave and maintenance.

12 November 1973 to 16 April 1974 – S.E.Asia deployment.

To 12 Dec'73: passage to Singapore via Townsville and Darwin;

Dec '73/ Jan '74: Singapore and patrols in area.

Feb/March '74: visit and exercise Subic Bay area, visits Hongkong, Labuan, Kota Kinabalu, Penang, exercise with RN task force;

22 March to 16 April 1974: passage Singapore to Auckland via Fremantle and Adelaide.

May/June: N.Z. waters – Auckland leave, NZ cruise to Bluff, Dunedin, Timaru – gun firings and training Hauraki Gulf – preparations for refit.

11 July: C.O. Steward left ship.

Long Refit – 12 July 1974 to 11 November 1975.

Tenth Commission

C.O. Cdr Eddie Eide assumed command 18 August 1975.

13 November 1975 to 22 May 1976:- Mainly Auckland area – post refit trials, steaming in company HMS PLYMOUTH and RFA GOLD RANGER, Auckland Anniversary Day regatta guard ship, visit to Tauranga, leave, shake down with HMNZS TUI and INVERELL.

22 May 1976 to 4 November 1976: deployment Aust and S.E.Asia.

22 May to 15 Jul '76: passage to Sydney – work up and exercises Sydney and Jervis Bay;

17 Jul – 2 Aug: passage to Singapore via Cairns, Prince of Wales Passage, Clarence Channel, Cairns and Darwin; to

2 Sep: Singapore area – RMN/RSN/NZ force personnel acquaint; exercise with RMN and Singapore forces; sports week; visit Penang.

2 to 27 September '76: passage to Manila and Subic Bay – exercises;

28 Sep – 8 Oct: passage to Sydney (partly in company with USN carrier and escorts); to

25 October – Sydney and sea areas exercising ('Kangaroo 2');

25 Oct to 4 Nov:-passage to N.Z. via Newcastle in company, variously, with HMAS MELBOURNE & DERWENT, and HMNZS CANTERBURY & TARANAKI with formation anchorages at Kari Kari and Orakei in Auckland. Then harbour and leave to 10 January 1977.

Eleventh Commission

C.O. Tony Lewis vice Eide 8 January 1977.

Jan '77: based Auckland – harbour and sea training, visit to Dunedin, Auckland Anniversary Day regatta guard ship.

February to June 1977 – deployment to Australia, Pearl Harbour and N.America:

4 Feb: sailed for Sydney and exercise RIMPAC briefings;

11 Feb to 7 March:- RIMPAC exercise at sea with HMAS MELBOURNE, SUPPLY, PERTH, BRISBANE, DERWENT, PARRAMATTA, HMCS PROVIDER;

2 March: **ASA Lyon and OS Leigh washed overboard during RAS, and recovered.**

3 March: arrived Pearl Harbour;

March to 24 May – passage to and deployment in U.S and Canadian waters – to

25 March: under CANDESRON 2, with HMCS GATINEAU, TERRA NOVA, KOOTENAY, PROVIDER, OJIBWA, ATHEBASCAN – passage to San Diego and exercises S. Californian operational areas;

April '77: visits (including calibrations etc) to Esquimalt, Seattle, Vancouver; to

24 May: at sea with RCN for exercises (MARCOT), visits to Sacramento, San Francisco, passage to Pearl Harbour.

27 May to 15 June 1977: passage to Auckland via Pago Pago and Nukualofa.

June thru September 1977:-mainly based on Auckland, docking, leave, shakedown, calibrations, gunnery exercises Vaulkner Id. transfer DOC people to Gt Barrier and back, shakedown with WAIKATO, visit Napier.

October 1977 – **Commenced “Resource Protection” duty (HMNZS “Greenpeace”?)**

30 September 1977 to 6 June 1978 - deployed N.Z. waters; to

9 Nov '77: “Resource Protection Patrol” (*RPP*) Tasman Bay, visit Wellington, *RPP* Mernoo Bank, visit Raoul Id, *RPP* – W.coast North Island through Cook Strait to Mernoo Bank, visit Lyttleton, *RPP* via E. coast to Auckland.

9 November 1977 to 2 March 1978: reverted to normal naval operating: at Auckland:-maintenance, TAMAKI gunnery training, CNS' divisions, 'AUCKEX' exercise, leave & maintenance, visit Dunedin with USS PINTADO, Waitangi guard and guardship;

Feb '78: visits and exercises with CANDESRON 2 – PROVIDER, KOOTENAY, RESTIGOUCHE –to Raoul and Suva, Mercury Bay and Wellington (CNS embarked).

2 March 1978: – arrested FFV *Taiko Maru*:

6 to 31 March Auckland –Seacat firing, SatNav fitted.

31 March-11 April: *Resource Protection* patrols –Mernoo/Otago/Mernoo – visit Nelson; continued *RPP* Mernoo bank and E. coast to Auckland;

11 to 30 April: to Whangarei – Noumea yacht race; SAR operation near Norfolk Id (trans-Tasman yachtsman) returned Auckland;

1 May to 5 June: reverted to *Resource Protection duties* – *RPP* N.Z. E. coast to Auckland Ids – Sarahs Bosom and Carnley Harbour, passage to Dunedin, *RPP* '9th exercise (!) with ENSEIGNE VASSEAU HENRY (French frigate) in Marlborough Sounds, passage back to Auckland, *Resource Protection frigate*, maintenance and Queens Birthday weekend.

6 June to 27 October 1978: - deployment to Pacific and N. American ports; to

21 June: passage to Pearl Harbour via Raoul Id and Pago Pago; to

16 July: P.H. area work up and gunnery and ASW exercises and visit Maui;

17 July to 17 September '78: passage to San Diego for exercises and command team training, fleet exercise with USN and RCN units, incl taskforce transit and visit to Esquimalt; return to Pearl Harbour. Continued exercising;

22 Sep; passage to Funafuti – anchored inside lagoon;

29 September 1978: **Princess Margaret embarked** for Tuvalu Independence celebrations on **1 Oct.**

2 to 11 Oct: passage to Suva via Apia, Tokelaus (Nukunonu, Atafu and Fakaofa) – berthed on USS NIAGRA FALLS; exercise with Fijian minesweepers;

17 to 27 October: passage to Auckland including exercise "LONGEX" with USS KINKAID and NIAGRA FALLS, HMAS DERWENT and HEWITT and HMNZS WAIKATO.

November '78:at Auckland.

Twelfth Commission

C.O. Cdr Jack Welch vice Lewis 7 November 1978.

12 December 1978 to 20 February 1979: mainly *Resource Protection* – *RPP*'s east coast both islands, Mernoo Bank, west coast South Island, Cook Strait, Chatham Islands, SAR Taranki Bight; visits Lyttleton, Auckland (Xmas leave), New Plymouth, Dunedin, Wellington, Timaru, Port Chalmers (with injured man), Bluff and back to Auckland.

Short Refit - 20 February 1979 to 27 July 1979.

27 July 1979 – "**Rededication Ceremony**"

To 28 October '79: post-refit harbour and sea trials, shakedown, command team training, and visits to Wellington (formation entry into harbour with TARANAKI, WAIKATO and CANTERBURY), and to Napier;

29 Oct to 14 Dec '79: to Sydney and return - work-up, command team training and final battle problem.

15 December 1979 to 18 February 1980: at Auckland – Xmas leave, emergency repairs to starboard engine, Navy Day and sea trials. *Note:* the C.O has commented that so many of those experiencing the 'work-up' training in Australia were drafted that 1980 saw the ship "back to scratch one"

19 February to 11 July 1980 – deployment to Pacific and N. American ports:

19 to 29 Feb,80: passage to Pearl Harbour via Pago Pago; heavy weather and illness of WEO;

1 March to 5 April: RIMPAC exercise; second visit to Pearl Harbour-troubled by fatal illness of WEO, Lt Cdr Williams, but offered substantial help from host ship USS PREBLE: Navy Office confirmed deployment to continue.

5 – 18 April: passage to and visit San Francisco;

18 April – 9 May: passage to and visit Parry Bay, Esquimalt, Vancouver (with HMAS YARRA), Nanoose Bay, Esquimalt again, exercise SQUADDEX in Canadian waters;

9 May – 20 June: visits Seattle, San Diego (maintenance), weapons training exercise COMPUTEX, transited Columbia River, visit Portland (Rose Festival), exercise TRANSITEX;

20 June - 11 July 1980: detached from task force, passage to Pearl Harbour, assisted yacht "Freedom", passage to Auckland via Pago Pago.

12 July – 6 August '80: at Auckland leave and change of command. **Farewell Pearl Harbour and CONUS.**

Thirteenth Commission

C.O. Cdr Karl Moen vice Welch 28 July 1980.

6 Aug – 9 Sep: passage to Sydney, maintenance, exercise SANDGROPER in Aust Bight, visit for fuel to Port Kembla, Albany, HMAS STIRLING and Fremantle; then to Hobart.

9 Sep – 20 Oct: Hobart, exercise with USS TRUXTON and HMNZS TARANAKI to New Plymouth; thence to Auckland. *Notes: Weather terrible, won Lew Smith rugby trophy in Sydney.*

20 Oct- 25 Nov: at Auckland.

25 November to 11 December 1980: passage to Apia via Suva, embarked U.S. Ambassador to NZ and official party; to Tokelaus for signing of official renunciation of U.S' 'sovereignty'; return to Auckland via Apia and Suva.

11 December 1980 to 20 April 1981 – New Zealand waters:-

Dec .80 – Jan '81 Leave, duty frigate, exercise with WAIKATO and TARANAKI, Guard for Commonwealth Games;

3 Feb: visit Napier – 50th anniversary of earthquake;

4 – 9 February: Waitangi celebrations, including Royal Guard, H.E.G.G. Sir David Beatty embarked.

9 February to 20 April: *E.E.Z* coastal patrols and to south – visits Lyttelton Campbell Id, Auckland Islands, Dunedin; shakedown (with substantially renewed ships co., exercise AUCKEX 81, and visit Tauranga with USS BREWTON; emergency generator repairs.(Missed 'shop window' in Wellington).

20 April to 28 July 1981 – deployment to Australia and S.E. Asia: -

20 April – 19 May: Passage to Sydney; joined HMAS MELBOURNE and SUPPLY and HMNZS WAIKATO for exercise 'SOUTHERN AURORA' to south of Australia, then 'BEACON COMPASS' and 'INDIAN PACIFIC' to west of Australia, visiting Bunbury and HMAS STIRLING (for fuel and refreshment, and arriving Bali 20 May. To

30 June: Passage to Singapore with WAIKATO, maintenance, Rugby (RNZN won Perth Cup), visit Bangkok, passage to Pulau Tioman with USS amphibious squadron, exercise STARFISH 81, and return to Singapore.

30 June to 28 July: return to Auckland via Jakarta and Darwin (with WAIKATO), Port Moresby, PNG *EEZ* patrol, and Cairns. **Farewell S.E.Asia.**

28 July to 20 September 1981: at Auckland – maintenance and leave.

21 September to 16 October: visits Wellington, Port Levy, Lyttelton, Marlborough Sounds, Nelson – *EEZ* patrols on passage, briefly in company with WAIKATO and CANTERBURY (separately).

Refit 16 October 1981 to 31 May 1982

16 November 1981 Refit C.O. Cdr R.J.Martin (QHM?) vice Moen

8 April 1982 Refit C.O. Cdr P.J.E.Baldwin (QHM?) vice Martin

Fourteenth Commission

C.O. Cdr R.J.Eckford vice Baldwin 17 May 1982.

1 June to 9 August 1982: post-refit harbour and sea trials and shakedown at Auckland.

9 Aug – 21 Oct '82: deployed Australia for work up, command team training and exercises, based Sydney, visits Port Kembla and Brisbane, rugby team won both Lew Smith and Auckland cups, 'TASMANEX 82'. Passage to Marlborough Sounds (operation 'AWKWARD') and Auckland. 21/23 Oct: emergency repairs to Seacat.

24 October to 10 December 1982: deployed to escort Royal Yacht and visit Australia again –

24 Oct to 1 Nov: R/V with HM Yacht BRITTANIA – escort to Suva and Lautoka;

1 Nov to 10 Dec: visits Hobart and Perth, exercise 'SANDGROPER'; visit Albany, passage exercise to Auckland.

10 December 1982 to 10 May 1983 – New Zealand waters: 10 Dec '82 – 6 March '83 Auckland – duty frigate, 'SQUADDEX', Waitangi Guard ship and maintenance.;

7 March to 10 May: 'AUCKEX', EEZ patrol duties including visits to New Plymouth, Wellington (3) and Auckland;

11 May to 6 November 1983: **Final visit to Australia and N.Z. ports:-**
11-28 May: visited eastern Australian exercise area and Sydney;

29 May –14 July: returned Auckland and conducted EEZ patrols, visiting Nelson, Dunedin and Lyttleton.

14 July – 4 November: maintenance, escort for USS TEXAS to Wellington (?), various local training classes, visits to Raoul Island (with stores), Mt Maunganui and Auckland.

Decommissioned 7 November 1983.

Sold to Pacific Metal Industries, Auckland....July/August 1987.