

1944

NEW ZEALAND

ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF FOR THE PERIOD 1st APRIL, 1943,
TO 31st MARCH, 1944

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency the
Governor-General*

The Honourable the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

Navy Office, Wellington, 25th July, 1944.

SIR,—

I have the honour to address to you the following report on the Royal New Zealand Navy and proceedings on the New Zealand Station during the year 1st April, 1943, to 31st March, 1944. This report has been curtailed in accordance with the procedure adopted since the outbreak of hostilities.

2. H.M.S. "Gambia" has been transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy and recommissioned as H.M.N.Z.S. "Gambia." She has since been serving under the operational control of the Admiralty. H.M.N.Z.S. "Achilles" has been refitting. H.M.N.Z.S. "Leander," when operating with an American Task Force, took part in the second battle of the Kula Gulf, a night action with Japanese naval surface Forces, in which she sustained damage and suffered casualties due to a torpedo hit, and is undergoing repairs.

3. The ships of the 25th Anti-submarine Minesweeping Flotilla have continued to be actively employed outside New Zealand waters under the operational control of the Commander, South Pacific. Fairmile motor-launches of the Royal New Zealand Navy are also now operating under that operational control.

4. As indicated in the report of the previous year, H.M.N.Z.S. "Moa" was lost during a heavy enemy air attack in the Solomons on 8th April, 1943, and as a result five members of the crew were reported missing and seven seriously wounded.

5. The sinking of a large Japanese submarine by U.S. aircraft assisted by H.M.N.Z.S. "Tui" was announced during October, 1943. The submarine was slightly larger than the one sunk by H.M.N.Z.S. "Moa" and "Kiwi" and carried a crew of about ninety-seven officers and ratings. The submarine was detected by asdic, and H.M.N.Z.S. "Tui" attacked with depth charges, which caused damage and resulted in the submarine surfacing and attempting to escape on the surface. H.M.N.Z.S. "Tui" opened fire with a 4 in. gun at extreme range, and subsequently aircraft sighted the submarine, which was giving off much smoke, and made a series of attacks, after which the submarine was seen to sink at a sharp angle. Six Japanese survivors who were rescued by H.M.N.Z.S. "Tui" confirmed that the depth-charge attack damaged the submarine before final destruction by aircraft.

6. The local naval defence of New Zealand has been maintained with certain reductions.

7. Recruiting of personnel for continuous service and for the period of hostilities only has been continued throughout the year, and personnel surplus to requirements have been loaned for service to the Royal Navy.

8. The development of Devonport Dockyard is progressing, and naval shore establishments have been commissioned at Wellington and Lyttelton for the maintenance of H.M.N.Z. seagoing ships and the training of personnel.

ATWELL LAKE, Commodore,
Chief of the Naval Staff.

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