

1929.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES.

REPORT OF THE COMMODORE COMMANDING THE NEW ZEALAND STATION, FOR THE
PERIOD 1ST APRIL, 1928, TO 31ST MARCH, 1929.

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

R E P O R T.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence, Wellington.

SIR,—

H.M.S. "Dunedin," at Wellington, N.Z., 1st August, 1929.

I have the honour to address to you the following report on the Naval Forces of the Dominion and the proceedings on the New Zealand Station during the year 1st April, 1928, to 31st March, 1929.

I. STATE.

The following is the present composition of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy: H.M.S. "Dunedin" (broad pendant of Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station), H.M.S. "Diomedé," H.M.S. "Philomel" (non-seagoing depot-ship and training establishment at Devonport, Auckland), H.M. Trawler "Wakakura," Oiler "Nucula."

H.M. Ships "Laburnum" and "Veronica" are also employed on the Station under the Commodore Commanding, but at the expense of the Imperial Government.

By Order in Council of 30th July, 1928, the duties of the Naval Members of the Naval Board were reallocated as under:—

First Naval Member: Operations of war and all Staff business; all large questions of naval policy and maritime warfare.

Second Naval Member: Personnel and material.

The responsibility for the organization of Intelligence duties on the New Zealand Station was assumed as from 1st April, 1928, from which date the Admiralty representative was withdrawn. This change has proved most beneficial, and has enabled the work to be centralized under the control of the Second Naval Member.

II. PERSONNEL.

Captain John S. G. Fraser, D.S.O., R.N., replaced Captain Reyne as Second Naval Member of the Naval Board during the year, and Lieut.-Commander Cyril J. M. Lang, R.N., commenced duty as Staff Officer (Operations and Intelligence).

There are at present 405 active-service ratings who have been recruited in New Zealand serving in the New Zealand Division: of these twenty-seven are in England undergoing training.

2. No difficulty has been experienced in obtaining the number of seamen and stoker ratings required, but very few suitable candidates for artisan and artificer ratings have presented themselves.

The following table shows the districts from which the new entries were recruited :—

Regimental District.	Seamen.	Stokers.	Artisans, &c.	Total.
Auckland ..	18	5	1	24
Paeroa ..	7	..	..	7
Whangarei ..	4	..	..	4
Hamilton ..	9	2	1	12
Wellington ..	3	..	..	3
Palmerston North	4	..	..	4
Napier ..	2	..	..	2
New Plymouth ..	4	..	..	4
Nelson ..	1	1	..	2
Christchurch ..	3	..	..	3
Dunedin ..	3	..	..	3
Invercargill ..	..	..	..	..
Totals ..	58	8	2	68

3. The following table shows the numbers discharged or dismissed after final entry during the period of this report :—

Cause.	Seamen.	Stokers.	Others.	Total.
Services no longer required, or as punishment ..	2	1	..	3
Unsuitable	4	1	1	6
Desertion	4	2	..	6
Invalided	2	1	..	3
Purchase	5	2	..	7
Death	..	1	..	1
Totals	17	8	1	26

4. The health and discipline of the ships' companies have been excellent.

III. THE NAVAL BASE.

The progress reported in my last report has been maintained, and further improvements on a considerable scale have been effected by Commander N. Clover, R.N., since he took over the duties of Naval Officer in Charge, Devonport, on 17th July, 1928.

2. The organization of the whole of the Base Victualling and Clothing Stores is now complete, and is most efficient.

The Gun-mounting Store, owing to congestion, will not be efficient until the enlargements for which provision has been made in the 1929-30 estimates have been completed.

The Inflammable Store has been condemned, as the ironwork is rusty and unserviceable. It is essential that a new store be built as soon as possible.

The Boat-shed has proved its great value to the Service during the past year, enabling the boats to be kept in a much better state of repair than formerly, and at a reduced cost.

The condition of the men's portion of the Dockyard lavatories leaves very much to be desired, and it is essential that new naval lavatories shall be built without delay.

The system of lighting of all the Base Establishments has been altered, with a result that a real and considerable saving of money has been effected.

The question of provision of adequate electric power to ships when lying at Sheerlegs Jetty has become one of some importance.

3. The organization of Takapuna Magazine has been greatly improved, and the whole administration reflects great credit on the Armament Supply Officer, Lieutenant H. A. Haynes, R.N. (retired). The new laboratory is now well under construction, and will, it is anticipated, be ready for the test of explosives due in June. The courtesy of the Defence Department in allowing this building to be erected on Defence Department ground is very much appreciated. With regard to new buildings required to comply with Admiralty recommendations, designs and estimates are being prepared.

4. In order to prepare for the advent of two B class cruisers to replace the present D class, proposals have been put forward for a committee to be set up to negotiate and report on the extension of the dock, replacement of obsolete workshop machinery, the berthing of H.M. ships, and responsibility for the upkeep of dock and surroundings, &c., with a view to proceeding with the work entailed.

IV. RESERVES.

The following is the state of the New Zealand Royal Naval Reserves :—

Officers, R.N.R.	8
Officers, R.N.V.R.	63
Men, R.N.R.—	
Class A (Active)—Men who have served in the Royal Navy or any Dominion Navy, and who come up for periodical training	86
Class A (Inactive)—Men who have been discharged from the seagoing Forces in New Zealand, other than those joining Class A (Active). These men are liable to be called up for naval service in the event of war within ten years of discharge from the seagoing Forces if not then over forty years of age	141
Class B—Men who follow the sea as a profession in the mercantile marine or steam fishing-vessels	12
Class C—Men ineligible for Classes A or B	96
Class D (Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve)—As for men Class C, but only eligible to join when a division is formed in any district where they may be living	420

There has been very considerable expansion of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during the past year owing to the inauguration of Reserve Divisions in Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin.

2. Extensive seagoing training of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve seamen of the four Divisions (Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago) was carried out during the autumn cruise. Each cruiser embarked two officers and twenty men from each division for a period of ten days. Great keenness was displayed by the Reservists, and I took the opportunity of the ship's visit to the ports to inspect the new headquarters and divisions at Dunedin, Christchurch, and Wellington. I am satisfied that the Volunteer Reserve Divisions at all these ports will prove most efficient, and provide useful bodies of men for the defence of New Zealand.

3. The Auckland Division of the R.N.V.R. took part in the combined Naval and Military Review at Auckland on the 5th June, 1928, under the command of Lieut.-Commander C. H. T. Palmer. This is the first time that the Auckland Division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve has participated in a review. Their appearance and marching was excellent, and reflect great credit on all concerned.

4. In the combined naval and military operations on the 13th February, 1929, the R.N.V.R. launches, manned by experienced Reserve officers (and owners) proved their value and adaptability to suit naval requirements. It is hoped that in future operations of this nature the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve may be able to take a larger part.

V. PROCEEDINGS.

(A) *H.M. Ships "Dunedin," "Diomedé," "Laburnum," and "Veronica."*

During April and until 11th May, 1928, the squadron, consisting of H.M. Ships "Dunedin" (wearing my broad pendant), "Diomedé" (Captain L. V. Wells, D.S.O., R.N.), "Laburnum" (Commander F. N. Attwood, R.N.), and "Veronica" (Commander G. W. T. Robertson, R.N.) cruised in New Zealand waters.

2. On 19th May H.M.S. "Diomedé," having previously docked, sailed for England to recommission and refit, proceeding via the Panama Canal, calling at Rarotonga, Moorea, Tahiti, Marquesas Islands, and Galapagos Islands *en route*.

The remaining ships of the squadron remained in company at Auckland until 5th June in order to take part in the combined Naval and Military Review held in honour of His Majesty the King's Birthday, when the Forces were inspected by His Excellency the Governor-General.

3. On 5th June H.M.S. "Dunedin" proceeded to the Hauraki Gulf for exercises, and the sloops sailed for the Pacific islands, H.M.S. "Laburnum" visiting the eastern groups of islands and H.M.S. "Veronica" the western groups.

4. H.M.S. "Dunedin" remained at Auckland from 15th June to 5th July, when she sailed for the Pacific islands and to take part in the Cook Sesquicentennial Celebrations in the Territory of Hawaii. During the cruise the Fiji Islands, Sydney Island (Phoenix Group), the Territory of Hawaii, Christmas, Fanning, and Northern Cook Group Islands were visited.

5. During the Cook Celebrations in the Territory of Hawaii, as senior British officer present I took command, within the limitations laid down in New Zealand Regulations, Article 7, of the British Squadron, consisting of H.M. Ships "Dunedin," "Cornwall," and H.M.A.S. "Brisbane." The conduct of the men was exemplary. I feel sure that the visit can be considered a most successful one, and I am satisfied that the appearance of the ship which I have the honour to command made her a worthy representative of the Dominion of New Zealand and of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy.

6. H.M.S. "Dunedin" returned to Auckland 10th September for docking and refit, where she remained until 11th October. She sailed thence for Akaroa and Wellington, at which latter port she arrived 25th October for the annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

H.M.S. "Diomedé" on her return voyage from England visited Honolulu, Suva, and other islands within the limits of the New Zealand Station, and reached Auckland 17th November, where she remained until 4th December, when she joined H.M.S. "Dunedin" in the Hauraki Gulf for exercises. Both ships returned to Auckland on 7th December for the Christmas leave period.

H.M. Ships "Laburnum" and "Veronica" arrived at Auckland in the latter part of October, and refitted until December, when they proceeded to the Hauraki Gulf for exercises.

7. On 15th January the whole squadron carried out exercises and firings in the Hauraki Gulf, the battle-practice target being towed by H.M.S. "Veronica" for the cruisers' firings. The squadron returned to Auckland at the end of the month in order to be present for the Auckland Anniversary Regatta, at the special request of that city, after which H.M. Ships "Dunedin" and "Diomedé" proceeded to Russell, where the annual pulling regatta was held.

8. On 13th February the whole squadron carried out combined operations with the Army. This was the first operation of this nature to be carried out in conjunction with the New Zealand Military Forces, and consisted in embarking at Auckland a force comprising about 500 men and landing them just before dawn on an open beach about twenty miles from Auckland for an attack on that city.

9. All ships then left for cruises in New Zealand waters. H.M. Ships "Dunedin" and "Diomedé" proceeded in company to Napier. Owing to weather conditions visits to Westport and Greymouth had to be abandoned.

On 12th March all ships rendezvoused at Paterson Inlet, H.M.S. "Diomedé" having visited Lyttelton and Dunedin; H.M.S. "Laburnum," Lyttelton, Dunedin, and Timaru; and H.M.S. "Veronica," Russell, Nelson, and Lyttelton.

From Paterson Inlet the ships dispersed to continue their cruises. H.M.S. "Dunedin" proceeded to Dunedin and Lyttelton; H.M.S. "Diomedé" to Bluff, the Sounds, and Timaru; H.M.S. "Veronica" to Lyttelton and Wanganui; and H.M.S. "Laburnum" to Lyttelton and Picton.

During the year H.M.S. "Dunedin" has steamed 15,200 miles and visited thirty-one different ports and islands on the station. During the same period H.M.S. "Diomedé" has steamed 31,300 miles (including voyage to England and return) and has visited twenty-one ports on the New Zealand Station, and eleven ports outside the limits of the station.

(B) *H.M.S. "Philomel."*

10. H.M.S. "Philomel" (Commander N. Clover, R.N.) continues to act as training-ship for the New Zealand Division, and Naval Depot Ship at Auckland. The need for the replacement of H.M.S. "Philomel" by barracks is becoming more urgent, as the ships' condition is rapidly becoming worse due to old age, and unless her replacement is decided upon shortly large repairs will be necessary in order to keep her effective.

(C) *H.M.S. "Wakakura."*

11. H.M.S. "Wakakura" (Lieutenant H. F. Edwards, R.N.) continues to prove of the greatest value in the training of Reservists, and in towing targets for ships of the New Zealand Squadron when exercising in the Hauraki Gulf. She proved of great use in assisting H.M.S. "Veronica" in handling the battle-practice target for the cruisers' firings in January. Specialist courses in mine-sweeping in H.M.S. "Wakakura" have been commenced for officers and men from Class D of the Reserve, who are considered to have sufficient seagoing experience to be able to master the seamanship detail involved.

(D) *R.F.A. "Nucula."*

12. During the year R.F.A. "Nucula" (Lieutenant A. W. Beardsall, R.N.R.) has been employed in bringing oil fuel from Martinez, California, to Auckland for the naval oil-fuel tanks and for H.M. ships, and in fuelling H.M. ships in the Pacific islands *en route*.

During the periods when her services have not been required for lifting cargoes or fuelling the cruisers she has been paid off to save expense.

VI. VISITS OF FOREIGN WARSHIPS TO THE DOMINION.

The French sloop "Cassiopee," after visiting ports in New Zealand, sailed from Auckland on 14th April.

The Japanese Training-ships "Idzumo" and "Yakumo" visited Wellington and Auckland in July and August, and the Argentine Training-ship "Presidente Sarmiento" visited Wellington in July.

These visits unfortunately occurred during the absence of the cruisers from New Zealand, but H.M.S. "Veronica" was at Suva during the visit of the Japanese Training Squadron and was able to pay the usual courtesies.

VII. DRILLS AND EXERCISES.

Every endeavour has been made to carry out frequent drills and exercises in order to increase the efficiency of the personnel of the squadron. During the latter half of the year gunnery and torpedo exercises have been carried out by the cruisers in the Hauraki Gulf during two periods, and also combined operations with the Army at a further period. When the whole squadron has been together every effort has been made to improve the signalling and manœuvring.

In addition to the combined operations, mention of which is made under "Proceedings," naval officers, at the invitation of the military authorities, took part in the Army Staff Exercise held at Waiwera in February.

I have, &c.,

G. T. C. P. SWABEY,
1st Naval Member and Commodore Commanding
New Zealand Station.

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