

1937.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES.

REPORT OF THE FIRST NAVAL MEMBER OF THE NAVAL BOARD FOR THE PERIOD
1ST APRIL, 1936, TO 31ST MARCH, 1937.

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

REPORT.

Navy Office, Wellington, 30th April, 1937.

The Honourable the Minister of Defence.

SIR, —

I have the honour to address to you the following report on the Naval Forces of the Dominion and the proceedings of the New Zealand Station during the year 1st April, 1936, to 31st March, 1937.

SECTION I.—STATE.

On 1st April, 1937, the New Zealand Division consisted of—

H.M.S. "Achilles" (broad pendant of the Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station); H.M.S. "Dunedin," arrived Portsmouth 29th March (to be relieved by H.M.S. "Leander" on 30th April, 1937); H.M.S. "Philomel," non-seagoing training and depot ship at Devonport, Auckland; H.M.S. "Wakakura" (trawler); R.F.A. "Nucula" (Squadron oiler).

2. Two escort vessels, H.M. Ships "Leith" and "Wellington," are maintained on the Station by the Imperial Government under the orders of the Commodore Commanding.

SECTION II.

3. On 31st March, 1937, there were 6 officers and 588 ratings borne on the active list who had been entered or recruited in New Zealand. An overall increase of 53 New Zealand ratings borne as compared with the numbers on 31st March, 1936. One officer and 20 Imperial ratings had been accepted for permanent service in the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy. The ships' companies were completed by 68 officers and 526 ratings loaned from the Imperial Service.

4. The ratings entered during the year included 40 boys for the Seaman and Communications Branches, 30 Stokers, and 8 ratings for miscellaneous branches, making a total of 78. Recruiting has continued to be very satisfactory in the Seaman and Stoker Branches, but some difficulty has been experienced in obtaining suitably qualified skilled tradesmen for the Artificer Branches.

5. Thirty-four New Zealand ratings were discharged during the year.

6. A large number of New Zealand ratings has been sent during the year to establishments of the Royal Australian Navy, and a limited number to Royal Naval Establishments in the United Kingdom, for special courses of instruction in technical subjects.

7. Another batch of 30 New Zealand ratings has been sent to England to serve in the Royal Navy on an interchange basis for approximately three years. The total number of New Zealand entries serving under this scheme is now 90.

8. The health and discipline of the ships' companies have been satisfactory.

9. Two New Zealand ratings have been promoted to warrant rank during the year, one to Warrant Engineer and one to Warrant Electrician.

10. The following advancements of New Zealand ratings have been made during the period under review :—

Able Seaman to Acting Leading Seaman	8
Leading Seaman to Acting Petty Officer	6
Petty Officer to Chief Petty Officer	1
Telegraphist to Acting Leading Telegraphist	1
Leading Telegraphist to Acting Petty Officer Telegraphist	1
Engine-room Artificer to Acting Chief Engine-room Artificer, 2nd class	1
Stoker to Acting Leading Stoker	11
Leading Stoker to Acting Stoker Petty Officer	1
Stoker Petty Officer to Chief Stoker	1
Writer to Leading Writer	2
Supply Assistant to Leading Supply Assistant	2
Leading Supply Assistant to Supply Petty Officer	1
Cook to Leading Cook	1
Officers' Cook, 3rd class, to Officers' Cook, 2nd class	2
Officers' Cook, 2nd class, to Officers' Cook, 1st class	1
Stoker ratings to Acting Stoker Petty Officer (provisional selection as Mechanician candidates)	8

SECTION III.—CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES.

11. Seven apprentices for various trades have been entered in the Naval Base. They are indentured to the Naval Officer in Charge at Auckland under conditions similar to those apprentices who are serving under the Public Works and Railways Departments.

12. The terms of an agreement governing the conditions of service of the civilian workmen employed at the Naval Base are being negotiated with the respective trade-union officials.

SECTION IV.—PERSONNEL, ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE (N.Z.D.)

13. The strength of the Royal Naval Reserve on the 31st March, 1937, was as follows : Officers, 12 ; ratings, 113.

14. It has been approved to increase the establishment of officers at the rate of two a year to a total of 20.

15. His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Royal Naval Reserve Officers' Decoration to officers and Long Service and Good Conduct Medals to men of the New Zealand Royal Naval Reserve under conditions set out in the Regulations.

SECTION V.—PERSONNEL, ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE (N.Z.D.).

16. The total numbers borne on the 31st March, 1937, were as follows : Officers, 66 ; men, 543.

17. List II has been abolished, and a supernumerary list has been instituted.

18. Approximately 60 per cent. of the executive officers and 59 per cent. of the men performed obligatory training in H.M. ships. Last year the percentages were 55 per cent. and 78 per cent. respectively. There is no falling-off in the keenness displayed by the men, but some employers have found it more difficult to co-operate.

19. Voluntary training was carried out by 11 officers and 105 men.

20. The provision of a new training trawler for reservists has been deferred pending the completion of other important commitments.

21. Minor additions have been made to the instructional gear at Divisional Headquarters, and the mine-sweeping equipment at Canterbury has been completed.

22. A suitable site belonging to the Otago Harbour Board has been provisionally selected for the erection thereon of new headquarters for the Otago Division at Dunedin, and plans are being prepared with a view to the work being taken in hand during the financial year 1938-39.

23. The Imperial escort vessels "Leith" and "Wellington" have rendered valuable assistance in the training of the R.N.V.R. by embarking officers and men for combined mine-sweeping exercises in conjunction with "Wakakura."

24. The regulations governing the entry and advancement of ratings have been revised ; ratings on entry are required to enrol for a period of four years, and, if recommended, may re-enrol for further periods of two years up to a total of twenty years' service.

25. His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Volunteer Officers' Decoration to officers and a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to men of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (New Zealand Division) under conditions set out in the Regulations.

SECTION VI.—PROCEEDINGS (CRUISERS OF THE NEW ZEALAND DIVISION).

26. On 1st April, 1936, H.M.S. "Achilles" (Captain I. G. Glennie, R.N.) was in Chatham Dockyard, having commissioned the previous day for service in the New Zealand Division.

27. The ship left Chatham on 20th April, and, after embarking ammunition at Sheerness, sailed for Spithead on 22nd April. Whilst at Spithead, the Walrus aircraft was embarked, and catapult trials carried out.

28. Owing to the international situation in the Mediterranean, H.M.S. "Achilles" was placed at the disposal of the Government in Great Britain, and was ordered to join the Second Cruiser Squadron, Home Fleet. She sailed from Spithead on 26th April and joined the flag of Vice-Admiral Commanding Second Cruiser Squadron, Home Fleet, at Gibraltar on 1st May.

29. H.M.S. "Achilles" carried out working-up practices and served with the Fleet until its dispersal on 15th July. During this period very valuable experience was gained by the New Zealand personnel.

30. The ship was docked at Gibraltar between 12th and 16th July, and sailed for New Zealand on Friday, 17th July.

31. Passage out was made via Jamaica, Balboa, Nukuhiva (Marquesas Islands), Christmas Island, Fanning Island, and Phoenix and Union Groups; the ship arrived at Auckland, joining the broad pendant of the Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station on Sunday, 6th September.

32. Leave was given to the New Zealand ratings who had left New Zealand in H.M.S. "Diomedé" in October, 1935.

33. H.M.S. "Achilles" sailed from Auckland on 5th November for a cruise to Wellington, Lyttelton, Akaroa, Dunedin, and New Plymouth. She returned to Auckland on 3rd December to give Christmas leave and to dock.

34. The broad pendant of the Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station was transferred from "Dunedin" to "Achilles" on 5th January, 1937, Captain I. G. Glennie, A.D.C., R.N., remaining as Flag Captain. On 25th January, 1937, the ship sailed for Wellington, and the crew carried out their annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

35. "Achilles" sailed from Wellington on 1st March for a cruise to Marlborough Sounds, Picton, Russell, and Auckland. She returned to Wellington on 22nd March.

On 31st March "Achilles" sailed for a strategical exercise with Royal Australian Navy, who were on passage from Hobart (Tasmania) to Wellington.

36. On 1st April, 1936, H.M.S. "Dunedin" (broad pendant of the Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station) was at Wellington. The crew was carrying out the annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

37. H.M.S. "Dunedin" sailed from Wellington on 27th April in company with the escort vessels, and returned to Auckland on 29th April to give Easter leave, and to dock.

38. An exercise programme was carried out from 1st to 3rd June. The ship then sailed for the Pacific Islands cruise on 15th June. She visited the Kermadec Islands, Niue, Vavau, Suva, Nukualofa, Pago Pago, Papeete, Bora Bora, and Rarotonga, and returned to Auckland on 28th August.

39. The biennial refit was carried out between 31st August and the end of October.

40. Sailing from Auckland on 3rd November, H.M.S. "Dunedin" visited Picton, Dunedin, Akaroa, Lyttelton, and Wellington, and returned to Auckland on 9th December to give Christmas leave. This was H.M.S. "Dunedin's" last visit to New Zealand ports after nearly thirteen years' service on the Station.

41. On the transfer of the broad pendant of the Commodore Commanding to "Achilles" on 5th January, Commander B. R. Willett, D.S.C., R.N., assumed command of "Dunedin."

42. H.M.S. "Dunedin" sailed for the United Kingdom at 1000 on 15th February. Passage was made via Papeete, Nukuhiva (Marquesas Islands), Balboa, and Kingston (Jamaica). The ship arrived at Portsmouth on 29th March, where she is preparing for her transfer to the Royal Navy.

SECTION VII.—PROCEEDINGS (H.M. ESCORT VESSELS).

43. On 1st April, 1936, H.M.S. "Leith" (Captain O. Bevir, R.N.) was at Wellington, where her crew was carrying out annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

44. The ship sailed from Wellington on 27th April, and arrived at Auckland on 29th April to prepare for her annual cruise to the Pacific Islands.

45. H.M.S. "Leith" sailed for the Pacific Islands on 17th June. She visited ports in the Tongan Group, Suva, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Ocean Island, ports in the Phoenix Group, Suva, ports in the Solomon and New Hebrides Islands, Noumea, and Norfolk Island. She returned to Auckland on the 2nd October.

46. Refit was carried out in November, and the ship sailed for Wellington on 30th November. She recommissioned there on 16th December. Captain L. C. P. Tudway, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N., relieved Captain O. Bevir in command.

47. The ship returned to Auckland for Christmas, and sailed for service with the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific on 20th January. She returned to Auckland on 2nd March.

48. During March she visited Lyttelton, Akaroa, and Wellington, and took part in the strategical exercise with the Royal Australian Navy on 30th March.

49. On 1st April, 1936, H.M.S. "Wellington" (Commander J. B. E. Hall, R.N.), was also at Wellington for the annual musketry course. The ship sailed from Wellington on 27th April and arrived at Auckland on 29th April. She remained there until 17th June, when she sailed for the Pacific Islands.

50. Ports visited in the Pacific were in Fiji and Tongan Groups, Pago Pago, Cook Islands, Papeete, and ports in Society Islands, the Niue Islands, Christmas and Fanning Islands, Jervis and Danger Islands, Nukunono, Suva, and Nukualofa. The ship returned to Auckland on 2nd October.

51. During the remainder of the year H.M.S. "Wellington" visited New Zealand ports, including Gisborne, Napier, Lyttelton, Timaru, Marlborough Sounds, Dargaville, Akaroa, and Wellington.

52. Commander G. N. Loriston-Clarke relieved Commander J. B. E. Hall in command in January, 1937.

53. H.M.S. "Wellington" sailed in company with H.M.S. "Leith" for a strategical exercise with the Royal Australian Navy on the 30th March.

SECTION VIII.—H.M.S. "PHILOMEL."

54. H.M.S. "Philomel" (Commander C. B. Tinley, R.N.) continues to act as training and depot ship at Devonport, Auckland. The ketch "Viking" was presented to the New Zealand Division by the Mayor of Auckland, Mr. (now Sir Ernest) Davis, and has proved of great value for training. All boys and ratings under training in H.M.S. "Philomel" have had sail training at sea in the "Viking" during the past year.

SECTION IX.—H.M.S. "WAKAKURA."

55. H.M.S. "Wakakura" (Lieutenant K. H. J. L. Phibbs, R.N.) has been continuously employed training the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

56. The ship is in good condition, both as to her hull and machinery.

57. This ship was also employed for a fortnight on survey work required for the Post and Telegraph Department in connection with the laying of the new Cook Strait telephone cable.

SECTION X.—R.F.A. "NUCULA."

58. R.F.A. "Nucula" has transported three full cargoes of oil from California during the year. Necessary docking and repairs have been carried out, the ship was docked in April, 1936, and January, 1937.

59. It has now been decided to terminate her charter from the Admiralty. The ship will be employed as a storage hulk until the new Naval oil-tank at Devonport is completed. She will then be sold.

SECTION XI.—NAVAL BASE.

60. The usual periodical dockings and refits have been carried out during the year.

61. The new agreement with the Auckland Harbour Board whereby the Naval Department took over all the land comprising the Naval Base, except the dock and dock machinery, was signed on 22nd December, 1936.

62. "Calliope" Dock has been lengthened, and work is proceeding with the renewal and extension of the wharves necessary for the maintenance of two "Leander" class cruisers. Work on the reconstruction of the Naval Base under the three-year plan is progressing satisfactorily. The actual construction of some of the buildings has been delayed due to difficulties of delivery of steel. Work has commenced to enable an area to be reclaimed in Stanley Bay for the erection of a 12,000 ton oil-tank.

SECTION XII.—NAVAL ARMAMENT DEPOT.

63. Good progress has been made with the construction of the new depot at Kauri Point.

64. Six magazines of the seventeen authorized are nearing completion, and it is anticipated that a part of the explosives now at Fort Takapuna will be removed to the new depot in July, 1937. This will relieve the overcrowding of explosives at Fort Takapuna.

65. The wharf and 10 ton electric crane at Kauri Point are now available for use, and progress has been made in the excavation and laying of concrete bases for the remaining magazines.

66. Fire hydrants and fire-fighting equipment have been installed and tested.

SECTION XIII.—VISITS OF FOREIGN WAR VESSELS.

67. The French sloops "Savorgnan de Brazza" and "Rigault de Genouilly" visited the following New Zealand ports: "Savorgnan de Brazza"—Auckland, 26th May to 3rd June, 1936; Wellington, 5th to 8th June, 1936. "Rigault de Genouilly"—Auckland, 26th April to 7th May, 1936.

68. The United States Destroyers "Preston" and "Smith" visited Auckland from 26th February to 4th March, 1937.

SECTION XIV.—DRILLS, EXERCISES, AND TRAINING AFLOAT.

69. The normal programme of exercises and drills has been carried out. The most valuable exercise period during the year was the period from 1st May to 15th July, when H.M.S. "Achilles" was attached to the 2nd Cruiser Squadron, during the concentration of the Home Fleet in the Mediterranean.

70. A programme of exercises was arranged with the Royal Australian Navy during the visit of the Royal Australian Naval Squadron who, on 31st March, 1937, were on passage to Wellington.

71. Combined mine-sweeping exercises by the two Imperial escort vessels were carried out in the Hauraki Gulf in May, 1936, and at Akaroa in March, 1937, for the benefit of Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve personnel.

I have, &c.,

E. R. DRUMMOND,
Rear Admiral, First Naval Member.

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