

1939.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF FOR THE PERIOD 1st APRIL, 1938,
TO 31st MARCH, 1939.

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

REPORT.

The Honourable the Minister of Defence.

Navy Office, Wellington, 4th May, 1939.

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 Naval Station during the year 1st April, 1938, to 31st March, 1939.

SECTION I.—STATE AND ADMINISTRATION.

2. On 1st April, 1939, the New Zealand Naval Forces consisted of—

H.M.S. "Leander" (broad pendant of the Commodore Commanding New Zealand Squadron).

H.M.S. "Achilles."

H.M.S. "Philomel" (non-seagoing training and depot ship at Devonport, Auckland).

H.M.S. "Wakakura" (trawler).

R.F.A. "Nucula" (hulk for storage of oil at Auckland; no longer seagoing).

3. Two escort vessels (H.M. Ships "Wellington" and "Leith") are maintained on the station by His Majesty's Government in Great Britain. They form part of the New Zealand Squadron. They are administered by the Commodore Commanding the Squadron, but are under the general control of the Chief of the Naval Staff.

4. H.M.S. "Endeavour" is employed on surveying duties in New Zealand waters. The cost of fuel and refit is borne by the New Zealand Government, other charges by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

5. The administration of the New Zealand Naval Forces was reorganized in June, 1938—the Minister continues to be the President of the Naval Board, and the Chief of the Naval Staff is now resident at Wellington. The Commodore in Command of the Squadron has ceased to be a member of the Board, and the dockyard establishments have been placed under the direct control of the Naval Board.

SECTION II.—PERSONNEL (ACTIVE SERVICE).

6. Careful consideration has been given to the question of entering New Zealand candidates for service as commissioned officers in the New Zealand Naval Forces. A policy has been worked out, and it is hoped that an announcement will be made in due course.

7. On 31st March, 1939, there were 7 officers and 688 ratings borne on the active list, all of whom (except 16) had been entered or recruited in New Zealand. The overall increase of New Zealand ratings borne during the year is 51. The ships' companies were completed by 72 officers and 619 ratings loaned from the Imperial Service.

8. The ratings entered during the year included 44 boys and 9 short-service ordinary seamen for the seaman and communication branches, 30 stokers, and 16 ratings for miscellaneous branches, making a total of 99. Recruiting has continued to be very satisfactory in the seaman and stoker branches, but it has not been possible to attract to the service fully qualified tradesmen for the artificer and artisan branches. A proposal to introduce a scheme for the training of naval apprentices has been held in abeyance owing to lack of accommodation, &c., at the Base. The matter is, however, being looked into following upon a decision to investigate the possibility of building a training establishment at Devonport.

9. Sixty-one New Zealand ratings took their discharge during the year. A large number of New Zealand ratings has been sent to the schools of the Royal Australian Navy, and a very limited number to naval schools in the United Kingdom, for special courses of instruction in technical subjects.

10. The "interchange" of New Zealand and Royal Navy ratings in the respective services under a scheme introduced in 1935 has been abandoned owing to the administrative difficulties involved and to the fact that the scheme absorbed man-power which could be more usefully employed at the present time. An opportunity is given, however, to a limited number of outstanding ratings of the New Zealand Naval Forces to serve in ships of the Royal Navy for periods of approximately twelve months.

11. A New Zealand Acting Petty Officer is undergoing a course in England for Warrant rank (Gunner (T)).

12. Approval has been given to enter a Schoolmaster in New Zealand, who is to be appointed on 6th May, 1939, to H.M.S. "Philomel" prior to proceeding to England to undergo special courses.

13. The following advancements of New Zealand ratings have been made during the period under review (previous year in brackets) :—

Able Seamen to Acting Leading Seamen	15	(11)
Leading Seamen to Acting Petty Officer	5	(5)
Telegraphist to Acting Leading Telegraphist	3	(4)
Leading Telegraphist to Acting Petty Officer Telegraphist	2	(2)
Petty Officer Telegraphist to Chief Petty Officer Telegraphist	1	
Signalman to Acting Leading Signalman	3	(5)
Leading Signalman to Acting Yeoman of Signals	1	(2)
Mechanician to Chief Mechanician, 2nd Class	2	
Stoker, 1st Class, to Acting Leading Stoker	19	(16)
Leading Stoker to Acting Stoker Petty Officer	4	(5)
Stoker Petty Officer to Chief Stoker	1	(1)
Stoker ratings to Acting Supply Petty Officer (provisionally selected as Mechanician candidates)	5	(8)
Writer to Leading Writer	1	
Leading Writer to Petty Officer Writer	3	(1)
Supply Assistant to Leading Supply Assistant	2	(2)
Supply Petty Officer to Supply Chief Petty Officer	1	
Cook to Leading Cook	2	(2)
Leading Cook to Petty Officer Cook	2	(1)
Steward to Leading Steward	1	

Transfer.

Petty Officer to Acting Regulating Petty Officer	1
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14. Experience of the recruiting and advancement policy adopted by the Board three years ago with a view to manning the Naval Forces wholly by New Zealand ratings has been encouraging. The introduction of an officer-entry policy together with the training-school policy will undoubtedly play an important rôle in the evolution of the Dominion Service.

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

SECTION III.—CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES.

16. Twelve civilian apprentices for various trades were entered at the Naval Dockyard during the year. The number now under instruction is 26. Steps are in train to enhance the value of the training by the appointment of qualified subordinate officers to take charge of the constructor, engineer, and electrical departments of the Yard.

17. The largest number of employees on the books on any one day during the year was 323 and the smallest number 115. The average number employed was 263.

SECTION IV.—PERSONNEL, ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE (NEW ZEALAND).

18. The strength of the Royal Naval Reserve on 31st March, 1939, was—officers, 14; ratings, 172; an increase of 1 officer and 28 ratings in the year.

SECTION V.—PERSONNEL, ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE (NEW ZEALAND).

19. The total numbers borne on 31st March, 1939, were as follows: Officers, 78; ratings, 610. Approximately 52 per cent. of the executive officers and 73 per cent. of the ratings performed obligatory training in His Majesty's ships. Last year the percentages were 51 per cent. and 69 per cent. respectively. Voluntary training was carried out by 18 officers and 193 ratings.

20. The efficiency of officers and ratings of all divisions continues to be satisfactory. Training has been carried out in the cruisers, escort vessels, and H.M.S. "Wakakura."

21. Tenders have now been called for the erection of New Divisional Headquarters at Dunedin, and work on this much-needed building will be commenced at an early date.

22. During Easter, 1938, an interdivisional tournament was held at Wellington, with satisfactory results.

23. The complement of Instructors allowed to each Volunteer Reserve was increased by one in order to provide for more intensive training.

24. Provision had also been made for the repayment of travelling-expenses incurred by reservists in attending drills and for the payment of a training grant for efficiency to ratings who attend a specified number of drills and perform the prescribed sea training.

SECTION VI.—PROCEEDINGS OF CRUISERS OF THE NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES.

H.M.S. "Achilles."

25. On 1st April, 1938, H.M.S. "Achilles" arrived at Wellington. The ship's company was employed on a musketry course at Trentham Camp. On 14th April the cable of the ship was fouled by the Union Steam Ship Co.'s ship "Rangatira" during a gale and all the securing wires were parted, so that she drifted ashore on the mudbank outside the boat harbour. The ship was refloated by 0100 on 15th April. Fortunately, she sustained little damage.

26. With H.M.S. "Leander" in company, the ship left Wellington for Hauraki Gulf on 19th April and carried out a programme of exercises there from 21st to 28th April. She then proceeded to Devonport and gave Easter leave to the ship's company.

27. On 8th June Commodore I. G. Glennie succeeded to the command of the Squadron and hoisted his broad pendant in H.M.S. "Achilles."

28. On 17th June the ship sailed from Auckland to visit Nukualofa, Vavau, Pago Pago, Funafuti, Niutao, Nanumea, Rotuma, Lautoka, and Suva. Owing to an outbreak of rubella on board, the ship was placed in quarantine at Pago Pago. Subsequently a case of measles was diagnosed, and the ship was ordered to return to Auckland on 15th July.

29. The annual refit of the ship was undertaken at the end of July. Having completed her refit, she sailed on 17th September for Lyttelton, Dunedin, and Wellington.

30. On 2nd December the ship was ordered to England to exchange her Royal Navy personnel, and the command of the Squadron was transferred to Commodore J. W. Rivett-Carnac, D.S.C., who hoisted his broad pendant in H.M.S. "Leander" at Suva on 8th December.

31. H.M.S. "Achilles" left Suva on 8th December, called at Papeete, Balboa, and Jamaica, and arrived at Portsmouth, England, on 24th January, 1939.

32. On 27th January, 1939, she received the balance of her crew from the Royal Navy, and left from Portsmouth on 21st February, 1939, for Gibraltar. She was attached to the Mediterranean Fleet for working-up practices until 20th March, when she sailed for New Zealand via Malta, Port Said, Ismailia, Aden, Colombo, and Singapore. She is expected at Auckland on 8th May, 1939.

H.M.S. "Leander."

33. On 1st April, 1938, H.M.S. "Leander" was at Wellington completing the annual musketry course. She sailed on 4th April for Nelson and Marlborough Sounds, and returned to Wellington on 13th April. On 19th April, in company with H.M.S. "Achilles," she sailed for Hauraki Gulf. She carried out exercises from 21st to 28th April, and then proceeded to Auckland to give Easter leave to her ship's company. On arrival she was taken in hand for annual refit.

34. The ship visited Russell from 12th to 22nd July, and then left Auckland for Lyttelton, Dunedin, Nelson, and Picton on 6th August, returning on 7th September.

35. During the emergency of the last week in September, 1938, H.M.S. "Leander" was docked and stored for service. Two programmes of exercises were carried out in Hauraki Gulf.

36. Having embarked the New Zealand Chiefs of the Staff the ship sailed for Suva and other Pacific Ocean islands on 7th November, 1938. She returned to Auckland on 12th December, when normal Christmas leave was given.

37. H.M.S. "Leander" became the flagship of the Squadron on 8th December, when Commodore J. W. Rivett-Carnac, D.S.C., assumed command, *vice* Commodore I. G. Glennie.

38. During the period 12th December to 30th March the ship was in hand for her biennial refit at Devonport and was docked.

SECTION VII.—PROCEEDINGS OF THE ESCORT VESSELS AND H.M.S. "ENDEAVOUR."

39. H.M.S. "Leith" was at Wellington on 1st April, 1938. She then visited Akaroa and Lyttelton, and sailed for Sydney on 2nd May, 1938.

40. She sailed from Sydney on 13th June and visited ports in the Tongan, Lau, and Fiji groups, followed by ports in the Society Islands, and Pago Pago. She returned to Auckland on 10th September, and has subsequently visited Napier, Waikokopu, Tolaga Bay, Tokomaru Bay, Hicks Bay, and Port Fitzroy.

41. H.M.S. "Wellington" was in company with H.M.S. "Leith" at Akaroa in April, and sailed with her for Sydney.

42. She left Sydney on 13th June and visited ports in Fiji, the Line Islands, Ocean Island, and ports in the Gilbert and Ellice groups. She returned to Auckland on 9th September, 1938.

43. Subsequently she visited Gisborne, Lyttelton, and the west-coast sounds, and arrived at Auckland on 30th November to refit and dock.

44. Both ships were docked and stored for service, and carried out two programmes of exercises in the Hauraki Gulf during the last few weeks of September, 1938.

45. H.M.S. "Wellington" carried out combined operations with Army units on 11th and 12th February, 1939, and subsequently sailed from Auckland for Port Fitzroy, Russell, and Sydney.

46. Since 6th January, 1939, H.M.S. "Leith" has visited Timaru, Bluff, west-coast sounds, Lyttelton, and Russell. On 25th February both escort vessels arrived at Sydney to carry out exercises.

47. Captain L. C. P. Tudway, R.N., was relieved in command of H.M.S. "Leith" by Commander C. R. Waymouth on the 18th December, 1938. Commander G. N. Loriston-Clarke, R.N., was relieved in command of H.M.S. "Wellington" by Commander R. E. Hyde-Smith, R.N., on 7th January, 1939.

48. H.M.S. "Endeavour" was employed continuously on survey work until 3rd June, when she returned to Auckland to refit and to enable her officers to draw the fair charts of the previous year's work. She resumed survey duties on 3rd October, 1938, and is now working in the vicinity of Bream Head. Details of her survey operations have been supplied to the Honourable the Minister of Marine in the form of monthly reports.

SECTION VIII.—H.M.S. "PHILOMEL."

49. H.M.S. "Philomel" continues to act as training-ship at Devonport, Auckland. As it proved to be impossible for the time being to find a suitable site for a naval barracks to replace H.M.S. "Philomel," it has now been decided to reconstruct that ship for further service as accommodation ship and in recruit-training work. It has also been approved to equip a post-recruit-training school at Devonport, which will be staffed from the depot ship. The reconstruction will be undertaken as soon as practicable so that the rate of recruiting can be increased at an early date. The scheme involves the provision of certain new buildings before reconstruction work can be taken in hand.

50. During the year Captain H. M. Barnes, R.N., was appointed as Captain in Charge and as Captain Superintendent of the Dockyard, in succession to Commander C. B. Tinley, O.B.E., R.N., who reverted to the Royal Navy.

SECTION IX.—H.M.S. "WAKAKURA."

51. H.M.S. "Wakakura" has been continuously employed training the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserves. Lieutenant K. H. J. L. Phibbs, R.N., who was in command of this ship, reverted to the Royal Navy during the year, and Lieutenant P. B. N. Lewis, R.N., was appointed as his relief.

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

SECTION X.—R.F.A. "NUCULA."

53. R.F.A. "Nucula" has been laid up since 5th July, 1937. She is being employed as a storage hulk for oil fuel.

SECTION XI.—NAVAL DOCKYARD AND DOCKYARD STORE.

54. The usual periodical dockings and refits have been carried out during the year. Good progress is being made with the reconstruction works. The last tier of side plating of a new oil-fuel tank is in place, and the laying of the new oil fuel pipe-line is in hand and is progressing satisfactorily.

55. Nearly all the new machinery has been delivered, and it is being transferred from temporary shops to the machine-shop recently completed. The electrical shop is well in hand. The Dockyard stores are now being cleared of machinery, and so it is possible to build up stores reserves more rapidly and to reorganize the staff.

56. Much roading and drainage work has been completed during the year.

57. As stated in paragraph 16, approval has been given for strengthening the professional staff. In view of the very specialized nature of the refit work, the new staff will be furnished from Admiralty resources.

SECTION XII.—NAVAL ARMAMENT DEPOT.

58. The naval leasehold property at Fort Takapuna, Devonport, was handed over to the Army Department on 29th September, 1938, the transfer to Kauri Point Naval Armament Depot having been effected as from 21st September, 1938.

59. Except for a few minor items the whole of this project, which has cost £109,000, has been completed according to plan.

SECTION XIII.—VISITS OF FOREIGN WAR VESSELS.

60. The French training cruiser “Jeanne d’Arc” visited Auckland on 19th April, 1938.

61. The French sloop “Rigault de Genouilly” visited Auckland from 13th to 23rd May, 1938.

62. The United States of America destroyer U.S.S. “Maury” visited Auckland from 31st October to 9th November, 1938.

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

63. The normal programme of exercises and drills has been carried out.

64. Combined minesweeping exercises by the two Imperial escort vessels were carried out at Akaroa in April, 1938, and in Hauraki Gulf in September, 1938, for the benefit of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve personnel.

SECTION XV.—GENERAL.

65. I would lay stress upon the fact that a great deal has been done during the past year to implement the policy of consolidating the elements (such as repair, training, and storing facilities) essential to effective progress in the evolution of a Naval Service. The administrative machine has also been adjusted to meet the demands of a forward policy. Progress is restricted in some directions by lack of qualified staff, but steps have been taken to build up the organization on sound lines by laying plans for the development of a post-recruit-training centre, for the extension of recreation facilities, for the reconstruction of the depot ship, for the entry of officers, and for the appointment of a professional civilian staff.

H. E. HORAN,

Commodore,
Chief of the Naval Staff.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (545 copies), £5 10s

By Authority: E. V. PAUL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1939.

Price 6d.]

