



Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand

Newsletter
May/June 2018

Dear shipmates, families and friends

Senior Naval Rating Wins Badge Design Contest



No one was more surprised to be judged the winner of the Royal New Zealand Navy's (RNZN) badge competition for its newest and largest ship, HMNZS Aotearoa, than Steven Knight, a RNZN Chief Petty Officer.

"I was stoked just to be selected in the top 10 to be honest," Chief Petty Officer Knight said after being given the news of his win by the Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral John Martin. "I just tried to produce something that contained all the elements that were important for a Navy ship that carried the name of our country.

When HMNZS Aotearoa is commissioned in early 2020 it will not only be the new maritime sustainment vessel and fleet tanker but will also enhance combat operational capability, provide humanitarian aid, disaster relief and support monitoring operations in the Southern Ocean.

Chief Petty Officer Knight works at Devonport Naval Base as Project Manager responsible for Inshore Patrol Vessels upkeep and maintenance. He is pictured above with his wife Julia and children Jake and Gemma alongside Chief of Navy Rear Admiral John Martin.

Otaki College Students to Visit Imperial War Museum

Otaki College students Telesia Nelson-Latu, Josh Braddock, Ande Kakaraia and Tutaamure Mikora will visit London later this year taking in the Maritime Museum, Imperial War Museum and HQS Wellington where they will view the Victoria Cross awarded posthumously to Captain Archibald Bisset Smith (captain of SS Otaki). They will also visit Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen, Capt. Bisset Smith's old school. The trip is being made possible by Air New Zealand's "Airpoints for Schools" programme.

SS Otaki Commemorated



A good muster of our members gathered at Otaki College north of Wellington on 12 March 2018 for a wreath laying ceremony marking the engagement between SS Otaki and the German raider SMS Moewe on that date in 1917.

A well organised event on a fine day with pupils of the college helping with the wreath laying and the lowering and raising of the flags during the Last Post.

Our thanks go to Otaki College Principal, Andy Fraser, and to the College for their hospitality.

HMS Collingwood Remains Frontline

HMS Collingwood was commissioned in early 1940 as a new-entry training camp for hostilities-only ratings. The establishment comprised four training divisions and a gunnery section responsible for the final three weeks of a class's training. Shortly after, a signal section was added under a Signal Commander for the training of Ordinary Signalmen and Ordinary Telegraphists.

On the night of 18 June 1943 three huts were demolished by a bomb dropped by the invading force resulting in the deaths of 34 trainees, mostly aged 17 and 18, who were in only their first or second week in the Navy. The bombing was initially hushed up to avoid enemy propaganda opportunities and was advised to next of kin as a munitions accident.

RCCNZ President, Derek Whitwam, was in the next but one row of huts at the time and aided in clearing the carnage next morning. This was not the only time Collingwood was targeted by the Luftwaffe. The unexploded land mine mounted outside the cinema testified to this!



Derek was part of class Main Top 5X and is pictured front row second from left in this photo taken in 1943. CPO Tracy is front centre.

After the war, the Electrical Branch was formed to maintain, design and prove increasingly complex radars, sonars and communications systems. HMS Collingwood became the School of Electrical Engineering in 1946 and took over the training of all officers and ratings, with the exception of the Fleet Air Arm.



Subsequently the branch became responsible for weapons engineering and became known as the Weapon Electrical Engineering branch, later still becoming the Weapon Engineering sub-specialisation on passing electrical generation and distribution to the Marine Engineers.

On the demise of HMS Mercury, the home of communications training since 1941, history turned full circle in 1993 and a Communications Faculty was added to HMS Collingwood. Further expansion followed in 1995 when training of junior Weapon Engineer Officers transferred to the site following the closure of the Royal Naval Engineering College at Manadon.

The Maritime Warfare School is now part of the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) organisation, delivering Warfare Training on five sites: Horsea Island; HMS Temeraire and HMS Excellent all in Portsmouth; and HMS Raleigh in Cornwall and of course HMS Collingwood in Fareham.

WRENS celebrate 100 years ...



Past and present WRENS in London to celebrate the 29 November 1917 founding

... while HMS Belfast has celebrated its 80th birthday



HMS Belfast is launched by Mrs Neville Chamberlain on 17 March 1938; and a future naval officer polishes brass in preparation for birthday celebrations

Dates for your diary

Convoy Plaque Wreath Laying
Wednesday 9 May 2018 at Wellington Waterfront

Russia National Day
Thursday 14 June 2018 in Wellington

RCCNZ Meeting
Thursday 23 August 2018 at RSA Lower Hutt

Merchant Navy Day Wreath Laying
Monday 3 September 2018 at Hall of Memories, Wellington

RCCNZ Christmas Gathering
Thursday 22 November 2018 at Otaki

Welcome Back

A warm welcome back to Norm Batterham (ex HMS Bluebell). Norm was a Leading Cook on Bluebell until he was drafted when he was promoted to Petty Officer Cook. He was one of the original (#47) members of RCCNZ when it was formed by John Middleton. He lost contact with the Club over the years but Chris King has kept in touch. We also congratulate Norm on reaching 100 years old on the 2 February last and trust that he keeps in good health.

Pic of the Month



In strong winds and heavy swells, one of HMNZS Wellington's sea boats was sent to pick up a patient from Hut Cove after the vessel arrived at the Antipodes Islands in sub-Antarctic waters during early March 2018.



"Good news and bad news. Your cholesterol has stayed the same, but the research findings have changed!"

Q&A

Q:
Is Google
male or female?

A:
Female,
because it doesn't
let you finish a
sentence before
making a
suggestion!

Up Spirits!



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