

1941.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF FOR THE PERIOD 1st APRIL, 1940,  
TO 31st MARCH, 1941.

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

## REPORT.

The Honourable the Minister of Defence.

SIR, -

Navy Office, Wellington, 29th May, 1941.

I have the honour to address to you the following report on the New Zealand Naval Forces and proceedings on the New Zealand Station during the year 1st April, 1940, to 31st March, 1941. In view of present conditions certain information which would normally have been included in this report has been omitted.

### SECTION I. - STATE AND ADMINISTRATION.

2. On 1st April, 1940, 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," H.M.S. "Humphrey," H.M.S. "James Cosgrove," H.M.S. "Thomas Currell," and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary "Nucula" (hulk for storage of oil at Auckland, no longer seagoing).

3. H.M.S. "Hector" (armed merchant cruiser), which had been temporarily allocated to the New Zealand Station by the Admiralty, was withdrawn in June, 1940.

4. As a temporary war measure the office of the Chief of the Naval Staff and First Naval Member of the New Zealand Naval Board and the appointment of Commodore Commanding New Zealand Squadron were on 1st January, 1940, combined. The officer holding these two appointments was also in command of H.M.S. "Leander."

5. In the light of further experience it was found necessary for the Chief of the Naval Staff to be available at Wellington and to be free to attend conferences on other stations when necessary. Accordingly, the appointment of Commodore Commanding New Zealand Squadron was placed in abeyance, and the Chief of the Naval Staff and First Naval Member of the Board took up permanent duty at Navy Office in Wellington on 16th October, 1940. This arrangement has proved very satisfactory, as the Chief of the Naval Staff is now available to advise War Cabinet and the Government.

### SECTION II. - PERSONNEL (CONTINUOUS SERVICE).

6. The scheme for the direct entry of New Zealand cadets for service as commissioned officers in the New Zealand Naval Forces has been announced. It was proposed to enter during the year two Cadets, two Cadets(B), and two Probationary Paymaster Sub-Lieutenants. In view of the short time between the announcement of the scheme and the date when applications had to be received, the number of candidates offering for the qualifying examination was not large. (The syllabus is difficult and requires special preparation.) The result was that no candidate was able to satisfy the examiners and the Interview Board that he had attained the standard required for acceptance as a Cadet in the Executive or Engineering Branch, and only one candidate was accepted for entry as Probationary Paymaster Sub-Lieutenant.

7. Further applications were called during the latter part of the year, and as a result one further suitable candidate was entered in each of the Executive and Accountant Branches. During the year, therefore, the following officers were entered :-

One Cadet.

Two Probationary Paymaster Sub-Lieutenants.

The Cadet left New Zealand to undergo training in the Royal Navy under the conditions identical to candidates entered in England for service in the Royal Navy. The Probationary

Paymaster Sub-Lieutenants are undergoing six months special training in ships of the Royal Navy. On completion of their training they will return to New Zealand and serve in the New Zealand Naval Forces.

8. In addition to the appointments referred to in the previous paragraph the following have been promoted to or entered in New Zealand as officers for long service in the New Zealand Naval Forces :—

Two Acting Warrant Writers.

One Surgeon Lieutenant.

9. Eighteen New Zealand ratings were discharged during the year. The policy of sending New Zealand ratings to Australia to qualify for higher non-substantive ratings at the Gunnery and Torpedo schools has been continued.

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

Able Seaman to Acting Leading Seaman	..	..	..	..	10 (11)
Leading Seaman to Acting Petty Officer	..	..	..	..	4 (9)
Petty Officer to Chief Petty Officer	..	..	..	..	1 (5)
Telegraphist to Acting Leading Telegraphist	..	..	..	..	4 (2)
Leading Telegraphist to Acting Petty Officer Telegraphist	..	..	..	..	2 (5)
Signalman to Acting Leading Signalman	..	..	..	..	2 (1)
Leading Signalman to Acting Yeoman of Signals	..	..	..	..	4 (1)
Stoker, 1st Class, to Acting Leading Stoker	..	..	..	..	14 (15)
Leading Stoker to Acting Stoker Petty Officer	..	..	..	..	13 (5)
Stoker Petty Officer to Mechanician	..	..	..	..	3 (0)
Engine-room Artificer to Chief Engine-room Artificer	..	..	..	..	1 (0)
Supply Assistant to Leading Supply Assistant	..	..	..	..	2 (3)
Leading Supply Assistant to Supply Petty Officer	..	..	..	..	3 (1)
Cook (S) to Leading Cook (S)	..	..	..	..	1 (1)
Leading Cook (S) to Petty Officer Cook (S)	..	..	..	..	3 (2)
Leading Sick Berth Attendant to Sick Berth Petty Officer	..	..	..	..	1 (0)
Writer to Leading Writer	..	..	..	..	3 (0)

*Transfer.*

Stoker Petty Officer to Acting Regulating Petty Officer	..	..	..	..	1 (1)
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11. The health and discipline of the Ship's companies have been satisfactory. All recruits for entry are now required to undergo X-ray examination.

SECTION III.—PERSONNEL (ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE AND ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE (NEW ZEALAND)).

12. Naval reservists have been mobilized for service in the New Zealand Naval Forces.

13. One Royal Naval Reserve Officer completed divisional gunnery, torpedo, and signal courses at Flinders Naval Depot, Australia.

14. Five Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Officers have completed and nine are still undergoing divisional gunnery, torpedo, and signal courses in Australia. Nine of these officers have in addition completed courses and are qualified as Anti-submarine Control Officers. One other officer has qualified as Anti-submarine Officer by undergoing the Long Course in the United Kingdom.

15. One officer has been awarded the Distinguished Service Order, two officers the Distinguished Service Cross, and one rating the Distinguished Service Medal.

16. The re-enrolment of ex Royal Naval Volunteer Reservists has continued throughout the year, and their training has been carried out at Auckland and Wellington Divisional Headquarters. Applications to re-enrol have nearly ceased. The Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Headquarters at Auckland ceased to function as such at the end of March.

17. In order to provide accommodation for ratings employed in the port and undergoing training at Wellington, sleeping and messing facilities were arranged at the Divisional Headquarters as from 11th September, 1940.

SECTION IV.—PERSONNEL (HOSTILITIES ONLY).

18. The increased requirements for naval ratings was met by the mobilization of reservists and the ordinary recruitment for continuous service engagements. Then, in response to requests from the Admiralty, various schemes for recruiting officers and men for "Hostilities only" were instituted.

19. In view of the urgent need for trained ratings in the Royal Navy the Government approved the setting-up of a new training establishment on Motuihi Island in the Hauraki Gulf.

20. This establishment, in which the buildings of the quarantine station, taken over from the Health Department, have been used, was commissioned as H.M.S. "Tamaki" in January, 1941, and will enable an additional 250 trained ratings to be produced three times a year. Some of these ratings will be retained for service in ships of the New Zealand Naval Forces, but the majority will be lent for service in the Royal Navy. The men trained in this establishment are Seamen, Signalmen, Telegraphists, Stokers, and Accountant Branch ratings.

21. The establishment was started at short notice, and existing buildings have been improved, but new buildings and other works when completed will make H.M.S. "Tamaki" a self-contained naval training establishment enjoying an ideal position and provided with adequate living, training, and recreational facilities.

## SECTION V.—CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES (H.M. DOCKYARD).

22. Civilian apprentices for various trades have continued their instruction at H.M. dockyard during the year. The largest number of employees on the books during the year was 506 (519) and the smallest number 210 (280). The average number employed was 414 (348). The corresponding figures for last year are shown in brackets.

23. The work on the fitting out of the Union Steam Ship Co.'s vessel "Monowai" as an armed merchant cruiser and the conversion of trawlers for service as minesweepers was mainly responsible for the increase in the average number of men employed during the year. In some trades—namely, boilermakers, shipwrights, blacksmiths, and electricians—great difficulty was experienced in obtaining skilled tradesmen, and as a temporary measure a certain number of tradesmen were lent by the Railways Department. At one period during the year a total of 29 men were on loan—namely, 22 boilermakers, 3 blacksmiths, and 4 holders up. At the present time 9 men are on loan, being 7 boilermakers and 2 blacksmiths.

24. The supervisory staff of the dockyard has been strengthened during the year. Twenty-nine men formerly employed on a casual basis were transferred to the semi-permanent staff and 2 inspectors were also appointed, one for the Construction Department and one for the Engineering Department. A selected member of the electrical staff of the Public Works Department has been sent to England for comprehensive training in naval electrical work, and it is intended on completion of his training that this officer should take charge of the Electrical Department of the dockyard and relieve the inspector at present on loan from the Admiralty. Lieutenant (E) A. J. Lee, M.B.E., R.N., retired from the Royal Navy to take over the duties of foreman of the Engineering Department.

25. Further strengthening of the supervisory staff has become essential and is under consideration.

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

*H.M.S. "Achilles."*

26. H.M.S. "Achilles" has been on service on the New Zealand Station during the year. The ship arrived at Auckland on 23rd February, 1940, subsequent to the engagement with the German armoured ship "Admiral Graf Spee."

27. Shortly after her arrival at Auckland the ship was extensively refitted and leave was granted to the ship's company. On completion of the refit exercises were carried out in the Hauraki Gulf.

28. H.M.S. "Achilles" has since been employed on escort and patrol duties on the New Zealand Station.

*H.M.S. "Leander."*

29. H.M.S. "Leander" has been operating with units of the Royal Navy and has been employed on patrol and escort duties.

30. On 10th March, 1941, it was announced that a fast Italian ship, armed with four 4.7 inch guns and acting as a commerce raider, had been destroyed in the Indian Ocean by H.M.S. "Leander" (commanded by Captain R. H. Bevan, Royal Navy). The Italian ship was "Ramb I," 3,667 tons, capable of a speed of 18½ knots and owned by the Italian Government. She was flying the Red Ensign when intercepted, and on being ordered to stop hoisted the Italian colours and opened fire. H.M.S. "Leander" at once replied, and after she had fired five salvos "Ramb I" struck her flag. Eleven officers and 89 men were picked by H.M.S. "Leander" and are now prisoners of war. "Ramb I" burned and sank about fifty minutes later. H.M.S. "Leander" sustained no damage or casualties.

*H.M.S. "Monowai."*

31. The Government requisitioned the Union Steam Ship Co.'s vessel "Monowai," and she was fitted out as an armed merchant cruiser. The ship was commissioned on 30th August, 1940, with Acting Captain H. V. P. McLintock, Royal Navy, in command.

32. The fitting-out of the vessel was entirely satisfactory, and trials and exercises were completed by the end of October, 1940.

33. Since that date the ship has been employed on escort and patrol duties on the New Zealand Station.

## SECTION VII.—H.M.S. "PHILOMEL."

34. H.M.S. "Philomel" continues to serve as a depot and training ship at Devonport, Auckland. Consequent on the commissioning of H.M.S. "Tamaki," which undertakes all disciplinary training, it has been possible to extend the technical training carried out in H.M.S. "Philomel."

## SECTION VIII.—H.M. MINESWEEPERS.

35. Further minesweepers are being commissioned, and a mobile minesweeping flotilla will be maintained for service in any port of New Zealand as required.

36. The minesweepers are manned partly by Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve personnel and partly by Mercantile Marine personnel.

37. These vessels have been employed continuously except for short periods while refitting.

## SECTION IX.—R.F.A. "NUCULA."

38. R.F.A. "Nucula" continues to be employed as a storage hulk for oil fuel. The question of re-employment of this oiler is at present receiving consideration.

## SECTION X.—H.M. DOCKYARD AND NAVAL BASE.

39. Progress continues to be made with reconstruction works.

40. The naval sick-quarters were previously very inadequate, and new sick-quarters are now being erected. The clearing of the site was commenced early in August, and the building itself is now well advanced. Gunnery instruction huts and a 10-ton dock-side crane were completed during the year.

41. The erection of the naval barracks is progressing, and the first building is now being roofed and the walls made ready for plastering. The site for the second building is being prepared. Clothing and victualling stores have been arranged to accommodate accountant staff and large quantities of stores. The foundations for a welder's shop have been laid down.

42. Hot and cold water systems have been installed and wash-places are in use for workmen at the dockyard. An area beyond No. 3 oil-fuel tank is being reclaimed.

43. Apart from the work carried out on ships of the New Zealand Squadron, work was also carried out on H.M.S. "Hector." R.C.S. "Viti," owned by the Fijian Government, has undergone an extensive refit.

44. The increased activities of H.M. dockyard have been reflected in the volume of work of the Naval Store Department, and a large proportion of the work of the Department is the supply of stores and materials for dockyard work on H.M. ships.

45. Despite shipping difficulties, large consignments of stores have been received and are arriving regularly. The stores which are arriving are those for which orders were placed in New Zealand about six months before the outbreak of war, when every effort was being made to provide adequate reserves of stocks.

## SECTION XI.—NAVAL ARMAMENT DEPOT.

46. During the year the usual testing, receipt, and reissue of ammunition for H.M. ships and services has been continued. It has been found necessary to increase storage accommodation at the Naval Armament Depot, Kauri Point, by the addition of a shell store and magazine, which was completed in March, 1941.

47. No difficulty has been experienced in dealing with increased naval and auxiliary service requirements in regard to work or supplies under war conditions. In addition, it has been found possible to provide ordnance stores and ammunition for military defence from reserve stocks.

## SECTION XII.—DRILLS, EXERCISES, AND TRAINING AFLOAT.

48. Whenever possible exercises have been arranged with the Royal Australian Navy and units of the Royal Navy, and these have been of considerable value to ships of the New Zealand Naval Forces.

## SECTION XIII.—VISITS FROM FOREIGN WARSHIPS.

49. One foreign warship which arrived in New Zealand in March, 1940, sailed from Auckland during April, 1940.

50. The American cruisers "Brooklyn" and "Savannah" and four destroyers, "Case," "Shaw," "Cummings," and "Tucker," arrived in Auckland on 17th March, 1941, for a visit of three days. Opportunity was taken to extend a welcome to these ships in view of the cordial relationship which exists between Great Britain and the Dominions and the United States of America.

## SECTION XIV.—WAR ACTIVITIES.

*Examination and Naval Control Services.*

51. The Naval Control Service has continued in operation at the three defended ports of Wellington, Auckland, and Lyttelton.

52. The port war signal stations are manned by men of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and buildings have been erected to provide comfortable living-conditions.

53. The examination vessel at Wellington underwent a long refit of three months, the principal item being extensive repairs to the boiler, which it was originally intended to renew. The motor-vessel "Gale" was chartered as a temporary relief.

54. The examination service at Auckland has been regularly maintained, and, in addition, patrols of the approaches to the port have been maintained.

*Defensive Equipment of Merchant Ships.*

55. In order that ships may defend themselves when attacked by the enemy they have been fitted with defensive equipment. This work includes fitting new equipment, repairs, and maintenance.

*Instruction of Personnel of Mercantile Marine.*

56. Instruction in gunnery, depth charges, and signalling is carried out by the Naval Control Service on board defensively-equipped merchant ships. Although the members of the ships' companies are occupied with ships' duties when in port, it is satisfactory to note that they devote as much time as possible to instructional work.

57. Masters and officers are instructed in the use of confidential books and on coding and decoding, with particular reference to enemy reports, distress signals, and reporting suspicious vessels.

W. E. PARRY, Commodore,  
Chief of the Naval Staff.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.* Preparation, not given; printing (485 copies), £7 10s.