

1930.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES.

REPORT OF THE COMMODORE COMMANDING THE NEW ZEALAND STATION, FOR THE
PERIOD 1st APRIL, 1929, TO 31st MARCH, 1930.

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

REPORT.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence, Wellington.

SIR,— H.M.S. "Dunedin," at Lyttelton, N.Z., 13th August, 1930.

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, 1929, to 31st March, 1930.

I. STATE.

The New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy is at present composed as follows: H.M.S. "Dunedin" (broad pendant of the Commodore Commanding the New Zealand Station), H.M.S. "Diomedé" (at present in England undergoing large repairs), H.M.S. "Philomel" (non-seagoing depot-ship and training establishment at Devonport, Auckland), H.M. Trawler "Wakakura," R.F.A. "Nucula."

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

II. PERSONNEL.

Paymaster Commander John T. V. Webster, D.S.O., Royal Navy, relieved Paymaster Commander Evelyn N. R. Fletcher, M.B.E., Royal Navy, in July as Naval Secretary and Secretary to the Commodore Commanding.

2. On Monday, 9th September, I assumed the duties of Commodore Commanding the New Zealand Station and First Naval Member of the Naval Board in succession to Commodore George T. C. P. Swabey, D.S.O., Royal Navy.

3. H.M.S. "Diomedé" being due to proceed to England for large repairs, a reorganization of ships' companies took place in September. Those Imperial officers and men whose loan engagements had expired, certain New Zealand ratings due for training, and others required to complete her complement returned to England in her.

4. On 1st November Commander Charles E. Hotham, D.S.C., Royal Navy, relieved Commander Frederick N. Attwood, Royal Navy, in command of H.M.S. "Laburnum."

5. On the concluding day of this report there were 380 ratings on the active list who had been recruited in New Zealand; 289 of these were serving in ships of the New Zealand Division on the Station, forty-five undergoing training in England, and forty-six serving in ships of the Imperial Navy in Home waters awaiting return of H.M.S. "Diomedé" to New Zealand.

6. Due to one cruiser only being on the Station from last October until about April, 1932 (H.M.S. "Dunedin" proceeds to England for large repairs in March, 1931), it was found necessary to suspend general recruiting in May, 1929. Since this date a few ratings, other than seamen and stokers, have been entered to fill vacancies caused by wastage.

7. The numbers entered and the districts from which they came are shown in the following table:—

Regimental Districts.	Stokers.	Artisans, &c.	Total.
Auckland	4	2	6
Paeroa	1	..	1
Whangarei	1	..	1
Hamilton	1	..	1
Wellington	1	..	1
Palmerston North .. .. .	..	..	..
Napier .. .. .	..	..	..
New Plymouth .. .. .	..	..	..
Nelson .. .. .	..	..	..
Christchurch	1	..	1
Dunedin .. .. .	..	..	..
Invercargill .. .. .	..	..	..
Totals	9	2	11

8. The wastage caused by discharge and dismissal was:—

Cause.	Seamen.	Stokers.	Artisans, &c.	Total.
Services no longer required, or as punishment ..	6	..	..	6
Unsuitable	7	1	..	8
Desertion	3	1	..	4
Invalided	3	1	6	10
Purchase	2	2	3	7
Death .. .. .	..	..	1	1
Totals	21	5	10	36

9. The health and discipline of the ships' companies have been well maintained.

III. NAVAL BASE.

This being my first report, it is difficult to state exactly the progress that has been made in improvements, but certainly since my arrival at Auckland in November, 1929, Commander Nelson Clover, Royal Navy, the Officer in Charge of the Base, has done much towards improving the appearance of the Base. A gallery of figure-heads from old sailing-ships which traded with New Zealand has been set up, and, in addition, an anchor from the German man-of-war "Adler," sunk in the hurricane at Apia in March, 1889, which was recovered by divers from H.M.S. "Dunedin" this year, and presented by His Excellency the Administrator of Western Samoa.

2. A new Inflammable Store has been built and is now in use, also a Mine-sweeping and Paravane Store, which is of great value, allowing other stores to be used for their proper purposes. In addition, a garage has been built to house the motor tractor and lorry.

3. Work will shortly be commenced on the enlargement of the Gun-mounting Store provided for in the estimates. This will be a great improvement, as the store is congested, and does not allow of proper examination of the mountings.

4. The situation regarding the men's portion of the Dockyard lavatories remains as in the last report, but negotiations are in progress with the Auckland Harbour Board, and it is hoped that improvement will shortly be effected.

5. A new Guard House, entrance gate, and adjacent wall have been erected.

6. In June, 1929, with Cabinet approval, a committee was set up to negotiate with the Auckland Harbour Board and report on the extension of the Calliope Dock, replacement of obsolete workshop machinery, extension of berthing of H.M. ships, &c., in preparation for the replacement of present "D" class cruisers by larger vessels. These negotiations were postponed in February, 1930, to await the results of the London Naval Treaty and subsequent Imperial Conference.

7. The question of the provision of adequate electric power to ships when lying at Sheerlegs Jetty is still under consideration.

8. A site upon which it is proposed to erect Naval Barracks to replace H.M.S. "Philomel" has been selected at Devonport, and is situated above the oil-tanks. Seven sections of land have already been purchased, and at least two, and possibly four, additional sections will be required to complete the site. Due to financial stringency it will not be possible to commence construction before about the 1st June, 1931.

9. The new laboratory at Fort Takapuna is now complete and in regular use. Cabinet approval was given in February to expend a sum of £2,000 on new works to ensure the safe stowage of certain explosives and comply with Admiralty recommendations on the lay-out of the Armament Depot. The following were taken in hand and are 70 per cent. complete:—

- (a) Building firework magazine.
- (b) Building guncotton magazine.
- (c) Building target smoke-shell magazine.
- (d) Construction of concrete path and 2 ft. 6 in. rails from magazine to laboratory.

The efficiency and zeal of the Armament Supply Officer (Lieutenant H. A. Haynes, R.N. (Retired)) and his staff in the care and upkeep of the magazines and of the explosives are most praiseworthy.

IV. RESERVES.

The following shows the state of the New Zealand Royal Naval Reserves on 1st April, 1930:—

Officers, Royal Naval Reserve	..	..	..	..	..	8
Officers, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve	..	..	..	..	..	77
Men, Royal Naval Reserve:—						
Class A (Active)—Men who have served in the Royal or any Dominion Navy, and who come up for periodical training..	..	..	..	..	..	73
Class A (Inactive)—Men who have been discharged from the sea-going 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 sea-going Forces if not then over forty years of age	..	..	..	..	..	150
Class B—Men who follow the sea as a profession in the mercantile marine or steam fishing-vessels	..	..	..	..	..	10
Class C—Men ineligible for Classes A or B	..	..	..	..	..	100
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	..	..	..	..	..	406

The training of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve has been continued throughout the year.

2. All ratings have carried out seven days' sea training either in one of H.M. Cruisers or in H.M.S. "Wakakura." H.M.S. "Wakakura" made an extended cruise to the southern ports, commencing in January. Two officers and sixteen ratings of the R.N.V.R. were embarked at a time, and practical training given in gunnery, mine-sweeping, and seamanship. This training has proved to be most valuable. In view of the very limited accommodation available in this ship, the provision of a second training ship is becoming necessary, and this would also allow combined mine-sweeping to be practised.

3. Inspections of all four Divisions have been made during the year. I am satisfied that the training given is most thorough and efficient, and that the R.N.V.R. will be of great value in the local defence of the Dominion.

4. The Auckland Division took part in the King's Birthday Review, and the Wellington Division in the Anzac Day ceremonies. In both cases the appearance and marching were excellent, and reflect great credit on all concerned. The Wellington Division also provided a guard of honour on the occasion of the departure of the late Governor-General.

5. In the combined naval and military operations at Akaroa in February, 1930, the R.N.V.R. Training Cutter "Deveron," manned by officers and men of the Canterbury Division, took an active part in co-operation with H.M. Ships, and proved the value of their training. 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," "Diomede," "Veronica," and "Laburnum."

During April and the early part of May, 1929, the squadron, consisting of H.M. Ships "Dunedin" (flying Commodore G. T. C. P. Swabey's broad pendant), "Diomede" (Captain Lionel V. Wells, D.S.O., Royal Navy), "Laburnum" (Commander Frederick N. Attwood, Royal Navy), and "Veronica" (Commander Gerard W. T. Robertson, Royal Navy), was cruising in New Zealand waters.

2. On 25th April armed parties were landed to take part in the Anzac Day ceremonies from H.M.S. "Dunedin" at Auckland and from H.M.S. "Diomede," H.M.S. "Laburnum," and H.M.S. "Veronica," at Wellington.

3. On 26th April H.M.S. "Dunedin" docked in Calliope Dock to undergo her annual refit. H.M.S. "Laburnum" and H.M.S. "Veronica" arrived at Auckland on 28th April and "Diomede" on 12th May, where all ships remained in company until 4th June.

4. His Majesty the King's Birthday, 3rd June, was celebrated in Auckland by all ships of the Squadron dressing overall, and firing a royal salute of twenty-one guns. A naval contingent of 300 armed men was landed and with 150 men of the Auckland Division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve took part in the parade before His Excellency the Governor-General.

5. H.M. Ships "Dunedin" and "Diomedé" sailed from Auckland on 5th June to carry out a cruise in Australian waters at the invitation of the Commonwealth Government, returning to New Zealand at the end of July. Very great value is obtained by these two squadrons meeting periodically, and taking part in tactical and strategical exercises, competitive firings, boat-pulling, &c. More particularly is this so when there is only one cruiser on the New Zealand Station.

The two ships were warmly welcomed and very great kindness and hospitality was shown to both officers and men at all ports visited. From my predecessor's reports I gather that the visit was most successful, the conduct of the men being exemplary, and they ably upheld the prestige of the Dominion of New Zealand and the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy.

6. H.M. Ships "Veronica" and "Laburnum" paid off and recommissioned with new crews from England between 5th and 8th June. After carrying out a week's exercises and gunnery practices in the Hauraki Gulf, they sailed for their annual cruise in the Pacific Islands, H.M.S. "Laburnum" visiting the western groups of islands and H.M.S. "Veronica" the eastern groups.

7. On return from Australia H.M. Ships "Dunedin" and "Diomedé" cruised independently in New Zealand waters and returned to Wellington on 5th September and 30th August respectively.

8. I arrived at Wellington on Saturday, 7th September, in s.s. "Rotorua" and hoisted my broad pendant on Sunday, 8th September, assuming the duties of Commodore Commanding the New Zealand Station on Monday, 9th September. Commodore Swabey's pendant was struck on the same day that I hoisted my pendant and he sailed for England on 13th September, 1929.

9. H.M.S. "Diomedé" sailed for Auckland on 10th September to dock prior to proceeding to England for large repairs, and was joined there by H.M.S. "Dunedin" on 20th September.

10. The reorganization of personnel referred to in Section II and transfer of stores, &c., was carried out between 25th and 27th September, and H.M.S. "Diomedé" sailed for England on 2nd October by way of Tonga, Tahiti, Nukuhiva, Galapagos Islands, Panama, Jamaica, Madeira, and Gibraltar, arriving at Chatham on 30th November, and subsequently paying off into dockyard control on 20th December.

11. H.M.S. "Dunedin," after carrying out exercises in the Hauraki Gulf, visited Akaroa, Dunedin, and Lyttelton, returning to Wellington on the 24th October for the annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

12. On the 17th October H.M. Ships "Laburnum" and "Veronica" arrived at Auckland, and were taken in hand for annual refit, being joined there by H.M.S. "Dunedin" on 28th November. All ships subsequently proceeded to the Hauraki Gulf for gunnery practices, on conclusion of which they returned to harbour for Christmas leave.

13. On account of civil unrest in Western Samoa and the probability that H.M.S. "Dunedin" would be required to proceed there, all officers and men were recalled from leave on Sunday, 5th January. Definite orders were received on Wednesday, 8th January, and the ship sailed for Apia the same evening.

Before sailing, certain stores, such as steel helmets, tents, mess utensils, field cooker, &c., provided by the Ordnance Department were embarked, also a Moth seaplane from Hobsonville Seaplane Base with Flight Lieutenant S. S. Wallingford, N.Z.P.A.F. and two Air Mechanics.

H.M.S. "Dunedin" arrived at Apia on Sunday, 12th January, and a conference was immediately held on shore, the result of which was that two seaman platoons and the Royal marine platoon were landed. The seaman platoons remained ashore until the conclusion of the operations on the 12th March and the Royal marine platoon remained after the departure of H.M.S. "Dunedin" on 13th March.

During the whole of this period the conduct of the 150 men on shore was excellent, and they all worked under most trying conditions both night and day with the most willing cheerfulness.

On the whole, the health of the ship's company was good, except for a large number of cases of septic bites and sunburn which occurred amongst the men on shore and several cases of influenzal catarrh and debility on board as the result of lack of exercise, no leave being possible under the circumstances.

H.M.S. "Dunedin" sailed from Apia at 1000 on Thursday, 13th March, and carried out a full-power trial on passage, attaining an average speed of 27.7 knots after ten months out of dock.

14. On 26th March H.M.S. "Dunedin" proceeded into dock, and commenced her annual refit.

15. In January a small combined operation was carried out at Auckland with a naval detachment from H.M.S. "Philomel" and local Forces.

16. Between the 3rd January and 28th March H.M. Ships "Laburnum" and "Veronica" cruised independently in New Zealand waters.

A combined operation on a larger scale was carried out at Akaroa, troops from Canterbury District being embarked at Lyttelton in H.M. Ships "Laburnum," "Veronica," H.M. Trawler "Wakakura," and the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Cutter "Deveron," and landed inside Akaroa Harbour at dawn.

17. H.M.S. "Laburnum" was present at Dunedin on the arrival of Rear-Admiral R. E. Byrd, U.S.N., in the "City of New York," and welcomed him on behalf of the Royal Navy.

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

H.M.S. "Philomel" (Commander Nelson Clover, Royal Navy) continues to act as training-ship for the New Zealand Division, and Naval Depot Ship at Auckland. As the result of the postponement of the building of the barracks on account of financial stringency, arrangements are being made for a survey of the ship to be made to ascertain how long she can continue to act in her present capacity. It is considered that she will probably be fit to continue for another two or three years, provided a certain amount of repairs are carried out.

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

H.M. Trawler "Wakakura" (Lieutenant Henry F. Edwards, Royal Navy) has carried out a very large amount of Royal Naval Volunteer training work during the year. From April till December she was employed in the Auckland District both for training purposes and in assisting H.M. ships in carrying out practices in the Hauraki Gulf by towing targets, &c. The Dunedin Division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve were embarked in sections between 6th January and 15th February, and the Canterbury Division between the 19th February and the end of March.

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

During the year R.F.A. "Nucula" (Lieutenant Arthur W. Beardsall, Royal Naval Reserve) has been employed in bringing oil fuel from Richmond, California, to Auckland for the Naval oil-fuel tanks and for H.M. ships. In October she proceeded to Nukuhiva to oil H.M.S. "Diomedé" on passage to England, and in February to Western Samoa to oil H.M.S. "Dunedin."

When not employed in lifting cargoes or fuelling H.M. ships she has been paid off to save expense and investigations are at present being made into what further steps can be taken to effect greater economies.

VI. VISITS OF FOREIGN WARSHIPS TO THE DOMINION.

The German cruiser "Emden" (Captain von Arnauld de la Perrière) arrived at Auckland on 25th June, and proceeded into Calliope Dock the same day, remaining there until 28th June. She sailed for Wellington on 4th July, where she stayed until 12th July. The usual courtesies were paid by H.M.S. "Philomel" at Auckland; no other of H.M. ships were present during the visit.

The French cruiser "Tourville" (Capitaine de Vaisseau Abrial) visited Auckland from 29th July to 6th August, and Wellington from 8th August to 15th August. H.M.S. "Diomedé" was present at Auckland and H.M.S. "Dunedin" at Wellington.

VII. DRILLS AND EXERCISES.

Drills and exercises have been carried out on all possible occasions, and the efficiency of the personnel has been maintained at a satisfactory standard. The long period during which H.M.S. "Dunedin" was in Western Samoa was lost for training purposes. All available men were landed, and the remainder were fully occupied in keeping the ship clean and in running order. Competitive training and practices, which are so valuable, are at present, of course, at a standstill while there is only one cruiser on the Station.

Mention has already been made under "Proceedings" of the exercises carried out with Australian Squadron and the combined exercises with the Military at Auckland and Akaroa.

I have, &c.,
GEOFFERY BLAKE,
Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station.

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