

1936.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES.

REPORT OF THE COMMODORE COMMANDING THE NEW ZEALAND STATION FOR THE PERIOD
1ST APRIL, 1935, TO 31ST MARCH, 1936.

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

REPORT.

The Honourable the Minister of Defence.

SIR,—

H.M.S. "Dunedin," at Wellington, 20th April, 1936.

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, 1935, to 31st March, 1936.

I. STATE.

1. On 1st April, 1936, the New Zealand Division consisted of—
H.M.S. "Dunedin" (broad pendant of Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station):
H.M.S. "Achilles," commissioned 31st March, 1936, in England:
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 sloops, H.M. ships "Leith" and "Wellington," are maintained on the station by the Imperial Government under the orders of the Commodore Commanding.

II. PERSONNEL (ACTIVE SERVICE).

3. On the 31st March, 1936, there were 535 ratings on the active list who had been recruited in New Zealand, and 22 Imperial ratings who had been accepted for permanent service in the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy. The ships' companies were completed by 516 ratings loaned from the Imperial Service.

4. The ratings entered during the year included 40 boys for the Seaman and Communications Branches, 28 Stokers, and 11 ratings for miscellaneous branches, making a total of 79. Recruiting has continued to be very satisfactory, and no difficulty has been experienced in obtaining recruits of the requisite standard in sufficient numbers.

5. Twenty-three New Zealand ratings were discharged during the year.

6. A large number of New Zealand ratings were sent during the year to establishments in Australia and a limited number to the United Kingdom for special courses of instruction in technical subjects.

7. By arrangement with the Admiralty the Naval Board have made provision on the general lines of a scheme in force in the Imperial Naval Service whereby young New Zealand Seamen and Engine-room Artificers may be considered for promotion to commissioned rank in the Royal Navy. One candidate having passed through the preliminary stages provided for by the regulations has been appropriated to an Imperial ship. He will appear before the Fleet Selection Board in about April, 1937.

8. 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 sixty.

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

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

Able Seaman to Acting Leading Seaman	6
Able Seaman to Acting Sailmaker's Mate	1
Leading Seaman to Acting Petty Officer	2
Telegraphist to Acting Leading Telegraphist	2
Leading Telegraphist to Acting Petty Officer Telegraphist	1
Signalman to Acting Leading Signalman	1
Yeoman of Signals to Chief Yeoman of Signals	1
Stoker to Acting Leading Stoker	6
Leading Stoker to Acting Stoker Petty Officer	5
Stoker Petty Officer to Chief Stoker	1
Mechanician to Chief Mechanician	2
Writer to Leading Writer	2
Cook to Leading Cook	2
Leading Steward to Petty Officer Steward	1

11. The general question of recruiting New Zealand entries and their subsequent training and advancement has been made the subject of close inquiry by a committee appointed for that purpose. As a result it has been possible to increase the rate of recruiting and to advance a greater number of those already serving to higher rates.

III. PERSONNEL, ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE (N.Z.D.).

12. The strength of the Royal Naval Reserve on the 31st March, 1936, was as follows : Officers, 11 ; ratings, 105.

13. The approved establishment of Officers is 12. As this number is insufficient, and further candidates are available, it is proposed to seek approval to increase gradually the establishment to 20.

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

14. The numbers borne on the 31st March, 1936, were as follows : Officers—List I, 68 ; List II, 21. Men—List I, 560 ; List II, 777.

15. As there are no facilities for training officers and men on List II as at present constituted, it is proposed to abolish the former, to allow the latter to die out, and institute supernumerary lists. The numbers to be borne on these lists will be strictly limited and will be confined to officers and men who are prevented from attending regularly at Headquarters, but who may be available to carry out sea training.

16. Approximately 55 per cent. of the Executive Officers and 78 per cent. of the men on List I have performed obligatory training in H.M. ships. The keenness of both officers and men has been well maintained. The provision made for the additional (voluntary) training of officers and men has been utilized to the full extent.

17. Specifications and tenders for a new trawler for training reservists have been received from the High Commissioner in London, but the order has not yet been placed.

18. Further additions, in particular those connected with mine-sweeping, have been made to the instructional appliances supplied to Divisional Headquarters. These have been suitably installed at Auckland and Wellington, but restricted space has delayed action at Canterbury. At Otago the space available is totally inadequate. The Headquarters at Otago are generally unsuitable, and the provision of new premises is an urgent matter.

V. PROCEEDINGS (CRUISERS OF NEW ZEALAND DIVISION).

H.M.S. "Dunedin."

19. On 1st April, 1935, H.M.S. "Dunedin" (broad pendant of Commodore Commanding) was at Auckland completing her biennial refit.

20. On 12th April the draft of Imperial ratings arrived from England, and the ship was completed to full complement.

21. During the period 12th April to 5th June, gunnery and torpedo exercises were carried out, the ship docked and stored, &c., preparatory to sailing for the annual cruise to the Pacific Islands.

22. All ships of the New Zealand Squadron were present in Auckland for the visit of the Japanese Training Squadron H.I.M. Ships "Asama" and "Yakumo" from 21st to 24th May, and for the Jubilee celebrations on Accession Day.

23. On 5th June "Dunedin" sailed for the Pacific Islands, visiting Norfolk Island, Suva, Apia, Pago Pago, Danger Island, Fanning Island, Honolulu, Christmas Island, Penrhyn, Bora Bora, Tahaa, Papeete, Rarotonga, and Nukualofa, returning to Auckland on 30th August.

24. During the period 30th August to 9th October the ship was docked, and gunnery and torpedo exercises carried out in company with H.M.S. "Diomedé" in the Hauraki Gulf.

25. H.M.S. "Dunedin" sailed from Auckland on 9th October for a cruise to New Zealand ports, visiting Bluff, Dunedin, Akaroa, Lyttelton, Wellington, and Picton, returning to Auckland on 30th November to give Christmas leave.

26. After carrying out gunnery and torpedo exercises in Hauraki Gulf, "Dunedin" sailed from Auckland visiting Russell, Napier, Timaru, Bluff, and Stewart Island before arriving at Wellington on 16th March, where the ship's company are undergoing their annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

H.M.S. "Diomedé."

27. On 1st April, 1935, H.M.S. "Diomedé" (Captain C. M. Graham, A.D.C., R.N.) was at Wellington carrying out the annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

28. On 11th April H.M. ships "Diomedé" and "Leith" escorted M.V. "Rangitata," conveying the Governor-General designate, into Wellington Harbour.

29. H.M.S. "Diomedé" sailed on 12th April for Auckland, where the ship was docked, stored, &c., and a week's gunnery and torpedo exercises carried out prior to sailing for the annual cruise to the Pacific Islands.

30. On 18th June "Diomedé" sailed for the Pacific Islands and visited Nukualofa, Vavau, Rarotonga, Moorea, Papeete, Bora Bora, Manahiki, Danger Island, Pago Pago, Apia, and Suva, returning to Auckland on 23rd August.

31. On 2nd October "Diomedé" left Auckland for a cruise to New Zealand ports, but after visiting Napier, Picton, and Wellington, the Commanding Officer received orders to proceed to the East Indies Station for special service under the Imperial Government.

32. "Diomedé" left Wellington on 16th October and arrived Auckland on 17th October. Here the ship was docked, stored, and completed to full complement. On the 20th October she sailed for Aden, where she arrived on 11th November, having called at Port Darwin, Singapore, and Colombo for supplies.

33. From 11th November, 1935, to 23rd February, 1936, H.M.S. "Diomedé" was at Aden under the orders of Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station.

34. On 23rd February "Diomedé" sailed for United Kingdom and arrived at Sheerness on 12th March.

35. H.M.S. "Diomedé" paid off on 31st March and H.M.S. "Achilles" (Captain I. G. Glennie) commissioned the same day for service in the New Zealand Division.

VI. PROCEEDINGS (H.M. SLOOPS).

36. H.M.S. "Leith" (Captain O. Bevir, R.N.) was at Wellington on 1st April, 1935, completing the annual musketry course at Trentham Camp. The ship returned to Auckland on 14th April and prepared for her annual cruise to the Pacific Islands.

37. "Leith" sailed for the Pacific Islands on 11th June, and visited Niue, Pago Pago, Suva, and ports in the Fiji Group, Apia, the Tokelau Islands, Nassau, Suvarov, Papeete, Moorea, Bora Bora, Mauke, and Aitutaki, returning to Auckland on 20th September.

38. During the remainder of the year the ship has visited the following New Zealand ports :—

Wellington.	Wanganui.	Auckland.
Gisborne.	Akaroa.	Whangarei.
Tauranga.	Napier.	New Plymouth.
Whangaroa.	Tolaga Bay.	Lyttelton.
Hokianga.		

She also visited the Chatham Islands. At present she is at Wellington, where her ship's company are undergoing the annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

39. H.M.S. "Wellington" (Commander J. B. E. Hall, R.N.) arrived in New Zealand on 13th May, and after a short visit to Wellington proceeded to Auckland, arriving on 20th May. The ship remained at Auckland until 15th July, when she sailed for the Pacific Islands, visiting Vila, Bushman's Bay, Nauru, Phoenix Islands, Funafuti, Rotumah, Lautoka, and Suva, returning to Auckland on 21st September.

40. During the remainder of the year the ship has visited the following New Zealand ports :—

Wellington.	Dunedin.	Tauranga.
Picton.	Akaroa.	Greymouth.
New Plymouth.	Half Moon Bay (Stewart Island).	Bluff.
Tokomaru Bay.	Auckland.	Oamaru.
West Coast Sounds.	Nelson.	Lyttelton.

She is at present at Wellington in company with the remainder of the New Zealand Squadron for the annual musketry course at Trentham Camp.

VII. H.M.S. "PHILOMEL."

41. H.M.S. "Philomel" (Commander B. C. B. Brooke, R.N.) continues to act as training and depot ship at Devonport, Auckland. Commander Brooke will be relieved on 27th April, 1936, by Commander C. B. Tinley, R.N.

VIII. H.M.S. "WAKAKURA."

42. H.M.S. "Wakakura" (Commissioned Gunner A. Garden, R.N.): A large sum of money has been spent on this ship to ensure her maintenance in first-class condition and to increase the efficiency and comfort of the officers and men of her crew and reservists under training. As there is only one ship to carry out the training of the whole of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, the "Wakakura" has been continually employed.

43. The ship is in good condition both as to her hull and machinery, and the improvements effected are most satisfactory.

IX. R.F.A. "NUCULA."

44. R.F.A. "Nucula" was in commission from the 8th to the 10th May, 1935, for cleaning tanks before being taken in hand for necessary internal and external repairs prior to a voyage to San Francisco for a full cargo of oil, some of which was transferred to the ships of the New Zealand Division at Bora Bora and Suva.

X. NAVAL BASE.

45. The usual periodical dockings and refits of ships have been carried out during the year. It was anticipated that H.M.S. "Diomedé" would be taken in hand for biennial refit at the end of 1935, but her departure for special service has necessitated this refit being carried out in England.

46. Plans for the reconstruction of the Naval Base within a period of three years have been drawn up and approved. Work on the first year's programme commenced in September, 1935.

47. The actual construction of the buildings is behind schedule, but contracts have been let and are in course of fulfilment.

48. The lengthening of the "Calliope" Dock is proceeding, and plans have been drawn up for the extension and renewal of the existing wharves which are necessary for the maintenance of "Achilles" class cruisers.

49. Steps have been taken to enter into negotiations with the Auckland Harbour Board for a new agreement to meet the conditions of present-day and future requirements. Satisfactory progress has been made.

XI. NAVAL ARMAMENT DEPOT.

50. The overcrowding of explosives at Fort Takapuna has made a move to a larger magazine depot essential, and a start has been made to build a new magazine in an area capable of expansion. The building of this depot is designed upon the basis of a three-year programme, and good progress has been made in this the first year.

XII. VISITS OF FOREIGN WARSHIPS.

51. The Japanese Warships "Asama" and "Yakumo" visited Wellington from the 15th to 18th May, 1935, and Auckland from the 21st to 24th May, 1935.

52. The French sea-going sloop "Admiral Charner" visited Auckland from the 30th July to 5th August, 1935.

XIII. DRILLS, EXERCISES, AND TRAINING AFLOAT.

53. The normal programme of exercises and drills has been carried out, and details are given in previous sections.

54. A visit to Australia to carry out combined operations with the Royal Australian Navy was arranged for February and March, 1936, but had to be cancelled because of the international situation.

55. A combined mine-sweeping exercise by the two Imperial sloops was carried out at Akaroa in March for the benefit of Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve personnel.

XIV. POLICY: MATERIAL RESERVES.

56. As mentioned in my predecessors' report last year, the main policy is being directed towards the provision of adequate repair and other facilities required for the larger and more modern cruisers. This work is not as far advanced as in the proposed programme, and further delay may affect the refit of "Leander" class cruisers at the base.

I have, &c.,

E. R. DRUMMOND,

Commodore Commanding New Zealand station.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (470 copies), £4 5s.

By Authority: G. H. LONEY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1936.

Price 3d.]