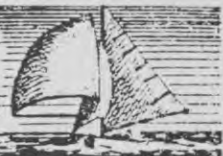


# Thrills at the Tiller



THE irrepressible call of the sea runs strong in the Kiwi's veins. Right through the darkest days of war, many New Zealanders have hastened on the flimsiest pretext to get down to the sea and its ships. Always a healthy interest has been maintained in yachting, and every opportunity has been grasped to indulge in this virile and thrilling pastime.

Without the type of boats in which he gained his love of the sport at home, the enterprising Kiwi overseas worked to remedy the position by building his own craft. In Egypt it was not long before an NZ influence was discovered among the yachts on the Nile, and in subsequent competition Dominion crews and craft favourably upheld the tradition of the sport.

More recently yachting has become an integral part of convalescence among soldiers, both in Egypt and Italy. At an NZ Rest

Home, located at a beautiful seaside resort near Alexandria, a keen recuperating patient built two or three small yachts. They have given many hours of ceaseless joy, not only to yachtsmen, but to others who have never previously experienced the excitement of sailing.

Now at an NZ Convalescent Depot in Southern Italy, the use of a Yugoslav cargo boat has gladdened the hearts of a host of ardent and would-be yacht lovers. Named the Sokol—meaning falcon—the boat represents a novelty in

that its shallow draught, designed for inter-island work, often makes sailing on the Adriatic a tricky business. None the less, favourable light days find more than ample numbers clamouring for a seat, and the open smiles of the bronzed sailors are full proof of the enjoyment this odd old craft affords.

New Zealanders stationed in the Pacific made full use of their leisure to fashion yachts from native outrigger canoes. They scooped out the hulls and streamlined the outrigger floats, sometimes built



By  
**PHILIP  
VELTON**

up the freeboard and covered in the deck, stepped masts with jungle stems and cut sails out of damaged tents. At Tonga there were some 20 of these boats, ranging from 8ft to 18ft.

A canoe club was established, and regular Sunday races were held for a trophy, won eventually by a unit CO.

Sailing such craft demanded expert handling. Before the wind, they had a snappy turn of speed, but would overturn in a trice, especially if the hamar (float) were lifted as the boat leaned. Running into the weather, however, they were sluggish, but none the less tricky. All sailing was done inside the reef, and as the water was tepid all the year round, capsizing was lightly