T-6C TEXAN II CHOSEN FOR RNZAF
FRIGATE TE MANA'S EYES IN THE SKY
KIWI FLAG—EXERCISE ASSESSMENT
Our mission
To carry out military air operations to advance
New Zealand’s security interests with professionalism,
integrity and teamwork.
Air Force News is the official magazine of the Royal
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The recent announcement by the Minister of Defence on the purchase of 11 Beechcraft T-6C Texan II pilot training aircraft heralds an exciting chapter in the transformation of the RNZAF into a 21st Century Air Force. In the space of little more than a decade we will have moved from largely analogue aircraft, to an all-glass-cockpit, digital Air Force.

This transformation has been achieved on the back of an enormous amount of hard work by a wide range of individuals across not only the RNZAF, but the wider NZDF and the Ministry of Defence. Everyone involved in the various projects should be immensely proud of their work in the revitalisation of our aircraft fleets.

Of course the aircraft are only part of the story. We also now have simulation capability for almost all fleets, as well as new infrastructure and facilities to support them. But the most important dimension is that of the people.

We have redesigned our training systems to ensure that we can adapt to and optimise the employment of the new technology. We now must become experts in composite structures, integrated systems, synthetic training, and modern supply chain management processes, not to mention new operating concepts, so that the considerable investment made by the Government is put to the very best use in the Future 35/Joint Task Force environment.

While it is exciting to plan ahead for this bright future, it is also timely to reflect on the magnificent job achieved by our older existing aircraft and by the personnel who have flown and maintained them. Our C-130 Hercules, P-3 Orion and UH-1 Iroquois fleets have all performed outstandingly, even as they approach 50 years’ service. The CT4 Airtrainer has also provided excellent service over many years, successfully training hundreds of RNZAF and many RNZN pilots.

We have squeezed the maximum amount out of every fleet we have operated and delivered significant through-life value to the Government and people of New Zealand. This has only been possible through the skill, dedication and professionalism of the high quality aircrew, technical and support trades men and women who have operated, maintained and sustained the various fleets over the years. This in turn has been on the back of the very high quality training that the RNZAF has continued to deliver; training that has seen us grow a reputation as being a small, but very professional, capable Air Force in everything we do.

In the space of little more than a decade we will have moved from largely analogue aircraft, to an all-glass-cockpit, digital Air Force.

While we have accomplished an enormous amount during the course of this transformation, it is not over yet. There is more work to do around future air mobility and airborne ISR capabilities, which could see further high-tech aviation systems introduced. Whatever decisions are taken in the coming years around new capability, I am absolutely certain that the attributes displayed by our people so far will stand us in good stead in achieving excellent outcomes in the future.

So stop and reflect on the contemporary Air Force that is taking shape, and congratulate all the people who have played a part in making this exciting future happen—they deserve it!
CDF HONORED IN NEW YEAR HONOURS

The Chief of Defence Force, LTGEN Rhys Jones, was awarded a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) in this year’s New Years Honours.

LTGEN Jones enlisted into the New Zealand Army in 1978. An Armoured Corps officer, he has had operational duty in the Middle East with UNTSO. As well he has commanded at every senior level. In 2007 he was appointed as the Commander Joint Forces New Zealand. He became Chief of Army in 2009 before being promoted as Chief of Defence Force in January 2011. With his three year term now completed he was relieved in January 2014 by LTGEN Tim Keating.

LTGEN Jones said he is honoured and humbled to be awarded the CNZM.

“Despite the challenges of the job, my three years as Chief of Defence Force have been an absolute pleasure and I have been honoured to command the men and women of the NZDF. We have achieved a lot in this time including the Christchurch earthquake response, the grounding of the MV RENA and, most recently, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

“We have also advanced our aims of a Joint Amphibious Task Force with Exercise SOUTHERN KATIPO 13, which tested our capability to mount a medium-scale amphibious operation. Our achievements during this time show the quality of the men and women of the Defence Force and I have been proud to have been your leader.”

Air Force News readers will be pleased to learn that Hon WGCDR Craig Walker was made a Member of the NZ Order of Merit. Craig has been an industry leader in heavy haulage and building removals and he is a generous community group supporter.

In 2009 Craig was made an Honorary Wing Commander in recognition of his contributions to RNZAF welfare organisation and the RNZAF community. Among other achievements, Craig had assisted with the relocation and re-fit of what is now the Walker Lounge at RNZAF Base Auckland.

Congratulations to two NZDF comrades who were awarded the NZ Distinguished Service Decoration (DSD) which recognises distinguished military service by regular, territorial and reserve members of the NZDF, including command, leadership and service in an operational environment, or in support of operations.

WO 1 Graeme Bremner, New Zealand Army Band, Burnham

WO 1 Paul Mumm, Trentham, for developing the Army’s All Arms weapons and shooting capabilities.

TROPICAL CYCLONE RECONNAISSANCE

During 11 January tropical cyclone ‘Ian’ struck the Ha’apai island group of Tonga, causing significant damage to infrastructure and shelter and one death. Communications were cut and grave concerns were held for the 4000 inhabitants.

Early on the 12th RNZAF Orion, callsign Kiwi Rescue 001, launched from Base Auckland. On arrival in Tonga the crew assisted local authorities in rapidly planning a reconnaissance mission.

During the 3.3 hour mission the crew photographed every island in the archipelago, discovering that in some areas nearly 80% of the dwellings were heavily damaged or destroyed. Once back on the ground personnel from both No. 5 and No. 230 Squadrons worked through the night alongside Tongan officials to analysing over 300 images. The data gathered was used to guide the delivery of aid to the worst-affected areas. The photo here is one of the Orion’s reconnaissance images.

With the Tongan authorities assessing the reconnaissance task as complete, Kiwi Rescue 001 returned to NZ, on the way carrying out a patrol of the Maui’s Dolphin Protected Zone on the west coast of the North Island.
CHANGE AT THE TOP

The new Chief of Defence Force, LTGEN Tim Keating, took up his appointment at a Change of Command Parade at Government House, Wellington, on 31 January. Previously the Vice Chief of Defence Force, LTGEN Keating was promoted at the parade and the next day began his three year term.

LTGEN Keating enlisted into our Army in 1982 and attended the Officer Cadet Training Company at Waiouru. After initial training he was posted to the 2nd/1st Battalion as Second-in-Command of a Rifle Company.

In 1986 he was posted to 1 NZSAS Group, where he held various junior officer appointments. He left 1 NZSAS Group to take up staff appointments but returned in December 1990 where he continued to serve with the unit, completing his posting in the role of Officer Commanding A Squadron.

He undertook the Australian Command and Staff Course, at Queenscliff, Victoria, before joining Army General Staff, Wellington. On promotion to Lieutenant Colonel he was posted as the SNO NZ Contingent MFO in the Sinai, Egypt. On his return to NZ, LTCOL Keating became CO 1 NZSAS Group.

In December 2001 LTCOL Keating was posted as Commandant, Officer Cadet School, Waiouru. Subsequently he studied at the US Army War College in Pennsylvania, graduating with a Master of Strategic Studies. He was promoted to Colonel and appointed as Special Projects Officer, HQ Joint Forces NZ in Upper Hutt.

In July 2005 COL Keating was deployed as the Commander of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (CRIB 6) in Bamyan, Afghanistan. On his return to NZ he was appointed Assistant Chief of General Staff, Office of Strategy Management. Subsequently LTGEN Keating was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the June 2008 Queen’s Birthday Honours.

COL Keating went on to be Commander 2nd Land Force Group, Linton Military Camp. Promoted to Brigadier, he assumed the role of Deputy Chief of Army, and was later appointed Chief of Staff to the CDF in HNZDF.

In February 2011 he was promoted to Major General and took up the post of Chief of Army. MAJGEN Keating was appointed Vice Chief of Defence Force in December 2012 and his appointment as CDF was announced in December last year.

Defence Minister Jonathan Coleman said “I congratulate General Keating on his new appointment as CDF. I would also like to thank outgoing CDF, LTGEN Jones, for his service to New Zealand. "LTGEN Keating is a strong, credible leader with 32 years of military experience. He has extensive organisational management, leadership, and operational experience, and is well respected within the NZDF and the international defence community. “During his time as Vice Chief, he has ably supported the CDF in uniting the NZDF around a strategic, cohesive vision for a future Defence Force. He has been able to translate strategic ideas into practical and achievable plans, particularly for use on the frontline.”

An interview with the new CDF will feature in next month’s AFNews.
On 27 January the Minister of Defence, Dr Jonathan Coleman, announced the signing of a contract for the NZDF Pilot Training Capability (PTC) with Beechcraft Defense Company LLC of Wichita, Kansas, USA.

“The $154 million package includes ground simulators, classroom and computer-based training packages to complement practical flying experience in turbo-prop T-6C aircraft. The T-6C has a proven track record in service with other militaries, and meets the NZDF’s performance and safety standards.

“The new system is expected to be operational for the first trainee intake in early 2016. It is estimated it will produce up to 15 graduate pilots and 12 Qualifying Flying Instructors per year over the next 30 years,” Dr Coleman said.

The contract signing was the culmination of three years’ hard work by the Project Team, MOD Acquisition and Capability Branch. Beechcraft has partnered with CAE Simulation (USA) who will provide the simulation and training element, and will subcontract Safe Air Limited and CAE Australia to provide logistics support at Ohakea for the capability.

The complete capability will include:

- 12 Avionics Desktop Trainers,
- two fixed base flight simulators (known as Operational Flight Trainers),
- eleven T-6C Texan II aircraft,
- a full mission planning and debrief suite (utilising the system already widely used by the RNZAF), and
- a full range of training courseware.

It will also involve infrastructure development at Ohakea with upgrades to No. 1 Hangar and a new training/simulation centre.

The Project also includes procurement of a new pilot selection tool to replace the existing ‘monkey box’ for recruiting activities. The RNZAF Psychology Directorate will run this sub-element separately from the main project.

The Contract was signed by the Secretary of Defence, Helene Quilter, and Beechcraft CEO, Russ Bartlett. At the signing ceremony of 24 January, the SecDef said “We are purchasing a first rate aircraft and training system and the decision was taken after an extremely competitive tender process.”

Speaking on behalf of CDF, the NZDF Chief Operating Officer, Will Peet, commented “The acquisition and support contract to give this capability through-life support is an enormous step forward for Defence.”

The T-6C training capability is currently in use with the US Government (USAF and USN), the Canadian NATO Flying Training Centre (NFTC), and was recently selected as the RAF’s primary training aircraft.

The PTC differs from most of the other projects that NZ Defence has undertaken recently, in several ways.

- First: the aircraft is ‘off-the-shelf’: There are several small additions to the baseline T-6C, but each of these will be fully certified by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prior to delivery.
- Second: the training system is the capability. Most projects include a small training aspect to ensure aircrew and maintainers are prepared to operate the equipment safely and effectively. In this case the project is entirely focussed on producing fully trained pilots for the NZDF.
- Third: the NZDF made the decision to out-source logistics support to Beechcraft, who will provide oversight and engineering control and utilise CAE Australia and Safe Air to provide the labour and other logistics support. Although requiring a separate logistics support contract, the negotiation team has worked with the contractor to ensure high levels of availability of both the aircraft and simulators. It is noteworthy that the logistics support contract is intended for 30 years, and it will bring real value through the whole life of the capability in RNZAF service.

THE PROJECT PROCESS

Following a comprehensive requirements and options analysis about Pilot Training Capability, in December 2012 the Project Team released a Request For Tender (RFT). This was
a 627 page document which clearly defined our requirements and asked respondents for a large amount of information. The tender allowed for a wide range of options, but was limited to non-developmental solutions.

It closed in March 2013 with responses provided by a number of bidders. An evaluation process was completed which involved the Project Team and specialists from throughout the NZDF, and resulted in two companies, Beechcraft and another, being identified as preferred bidders. Due diligence activities were conducted on both organisations and their proposed sub-contractors, and visits were conducted to overseas military flying training units already utilising their product.

At the completion of the evaluation and due diligence process a Best And Final Offer (BAFO) process was conducted in September 2013. The evaluation of the BAFO resulted in Beechcraft being named as the Preferred Bidder. Contract negotiations commenced in mid-November 2013.

THE NEXT STEPS

Beechcraft have already begun building the RNZAF T-6C aircraft, and there are currently four aircraft on the production line. Over the next few months our Project Team will:

• engage with CAE to initiate training and simulation development,
• commence quality control oversight at Wichita (FLTLT Craig Kenny will begin a 15 month posting to Wichita in March).

As well,

• work will begin on No. 1 Hangar and the new training centre at Ohakea through the Defence Property Group.

This capability will be a huge step forward for Pilot Training in the RNZAF. It replaces the current CT-4E fleet in the pilot training role and for the first time, the NZDF will have a comprehensive simulation capability and a fully integrated training system. The CT4 is planned to cease service with the RNZAF in the next couple of years. However, the Beech B200PL will remain in service to provide multi-engine pilot conversion and consolidation, as well as undertake its range of other transport and ancillary roles.

The first T-6C aircraft will be on the ground at Ohakea in mid-2014, but will be owned by Beechcraft and used for training maintenance crews initially. You can expect to see the first RNZAF aircraft flying in November 2014, with the training facilities and simulators in place mid-2015. The first Wings Course on the T-6C is scheduled to commence in January 2016 following the testing and validation of the capability, with the first Flying Instructors Course possibly commencing in mid-2015.

A number of RNZAF personnel will join the project team over the next year to ensure that the introduction-into-service runs smoothly and that its first Wings Course will run on schedule.
Following on from Exercise TRITON CENTENARY [see AFN 154 December] No. 5 Squadron deployed a P-3K2 to RMAF Base Butterworth, at Penang in Malaysia, for EX BERSAMA LIMA.

The overall deployment included three IRON SEA patrols, a full Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) joint and combined military exercise, and a NORPAT (Northern Patrol) on the way home. EX BERSAMA LIMA not only provided excellent training and Trials and Development (T&D) opportunities for the crew on board, but also for No. 230 and No. 209 Sqn personnel who deployed in direct support of our 5 Sqn detachment. This was the first opportunity for many in the crew and support team to deploy with the P-3K2.

IRON SEA Patrols. The name IRON SEA is derived from the shipping density in the area of operations—the South China Sea and the Malacca Straits. Thousands of vessels, from giant container ships to fishing boats, are in this area on a day-to-day basis. With the territorial disputes over islands and shoals in the South China Sea, the place is a hive of activity that many nations are interested in. The P-3K2 was able to conduct two of these IRON SEA patrols before the exercise and another after—before departing on the NORPAT.

The IRON SEA Patrols allow 5 Sqn to perform its ‘bread and butter’ Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance tasks in an unfamiliar and challenging environment. By all accounts, our allies were delighted to have an asset such as the P-3K2 in the area and were impressed with the information we gathered from the patrols.

EX BERSAMA LIMA. As a part of the FPDA NZDF personnel were involved in the exercise, as well as our RNZAF detachment. BERSAMA LIMA included Malaysian, Singaporean, Australian and UK air and naval forces and ground-based air defences. HMS DARING (the new British Type 45 destroyer) was withdrawn from the exercise to support the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan, but the FPDA naval task group was still an impressive force.

The ‘war’ involves two phases, Force Integration Training (FIT phase) and the WAREX. The FIT phase for us covered a range of operations including Anti-Surface Warfare (ASW)—working first in support of friendly naval forces, then switching sides to work for opposition forces (OPFOR).

We also conducted Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW). While there were no submarines on the exercise, ASW opportunities were provided by using an Expendable Mobile Acoustic Training Target (EMATT), a small programmable submersible robot about the size of a fence post. The FIT phase involved a lot of surveillance for us, because as a maritime patrol aircraft, we had to provide the surface picture of the enemy forces to our friendly ships, or, in the ASW role, to find the submarine that was in the area.

Once the WAREX started, the role of the P-3K2 changed as the tensions escalated. As a surveillance platform we were required to guide fighter aircraft to the enemy vessels, or to detect, deter or destroy the ‘enemy’ submarine.

By CPL Aaron "Ace" Lindsay
The exercise was also utilised as a big Trials and Development exercise for the P-3K2 sensors and systems, so we could develop and hone our procedures.

**OP NORPAT.** Once we departed from Malaysia, we headed home via our neighbouring Pacific Island states. A NORPAT is one of our standard maritime surveillance deployments. Although EEZ patrolling was the focus of the NORPAT, our detachment achieved more than just surveillance. In Honiara an aircraft visit was conducted where we hosted local law enforcement agencies, NZ High Commission staff and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA.)

The FFA in return hosted our crew to their post in Honiara, giving us an insight into the world of tuna fisheries management. The FFA manages Pacific tuna fisheries with the goal of maintaining world tuna stocks (currently on the decline) and ensuring its members generate the right income through fisheries licensing in their Exclusive Economic Zones.

The visit was of considerable value to the crew as a lot of the Pacific taskings we are given are in support FFA. There is nothing like a face-to-face with the people requesting your services to iron out the details. It turns out the FFA are a very capable (but small) group, headed by an RAN Commander working with limited resources providing oversight of one of the world’s most valuable food sources.

After the FFA visit we paid a visit to the impressive American WWII memorial in Honiara, which outlines the land, sea and air battles of the Guadalcanal campaign. With an invitation from the NZ High Commission, a small group led by our CO, WGCDR Rob Shearer, participated in a march for ‘No violence against women and children’. Local authorities were pleased with our participation, which was also backed up by service members from Australian and US (EOD) forces. After the day of visits and parades, 5 Sqn were back on patrol.

The ‘day off’ in Honiara was followed by a one day patrol of the Solomon Islands EEZ, before flying into Noumea where we hosted by French Navy’s No. 25 Sqn. 25 Sqn fly the French Guardian, a smaller maritime patrol aircraft. Our crew were taken for a tour through the Guardian before being wined and dined French style (many a cheese was consumed!)

This provided a good opportunity for sharing each other’s knowledge with respect to South Pacific operations—aircraft limitations and capabilities, success in various regions and tasks, and the practical challenges across the region—and of course some personal contacts were made.

The following day saw an 8 hour patrol home, including the northern part of our own EEZ.

We were a tired but professionally satisfied crew who had been away from our family, friends and homes for 30 days. All in all, our EX BERSAMA LIMA deployment was a great success. As well as engaging with our friends throughout South East Asia and the Pacific, a lot was learned from the exercise which puts 5 Sqn in good stead for the upcoming exercises and operations in 2014.

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**Exercise BERSAMA LIMA Orbat**

**AIRCRAFT**

**Fighters:**
- RAAF: 8 FA-18A/B Hornets
- RMAF: 4 FA-18D Hornets
- 4 Mig 29s
- 4 BAe Hawks
- RSAF: 16 F-16 Falcons
- 6 F-15 Eagles
- 4 F-5 Tigers

**Airborne Warning and Control**
- RAAF: E-7A Wedgetail
- RAF: E-3D Sentry

**Maritime Patrol and Surveillance**
- RAAF: AP-3C Orion
- RNZAF: P-3K2
- RSAF: 2 Fokker FK50

**Aerial Tankers**
- RAAF: KC-30 Multi-role Tanker Transport
- RMAF: KC-130M
- RSAF: KC-130

**SHIPS**
- HMAS SIRIUS (replenishment tanker)
- HMAS DARING (destroyer with embarked Lynx helo)
- Malaysia & Singapore:
  - 2 frigates (with embarked S70B or Lynx)
  - 2 corvette/patrol ships (one with embarked Fennec)
  - 1 fast attack craft
  - 2 mine countermeasures ships
Exercise KIWI FLAG began with 145 participants and six aircraft last November, but as the real-world typhoon crisis developed in the Philippines, some participants were called to pack up and head for the typhoon-devastated nation.
“The remaining crews, maintenance teams and air movements personnel worked hard to ensure the exercise objectives were met, including air drop, low level navigation and some night sorties,” explained WGCdr Richard Beaton, who commanded the Wing Operations Centre at Ohakea.

For the USAF, LTCOL Daniel Dobbels of 517 Airlift Squadron, said that KIWI FLAG provided the 517th Airlift Squadron an opportunity to practice deploying into an environment simulating wartime operations in a foreign country. “More air drop training and formation training is available in these exercises than at home station; this increases the level of experience crews gain during condensed training timelines.”

Flying the first C-17 into Timaru was memorable for its USAF crew. “We flew into Timaru to drop off the first load of cargo and personnel; we had to deal with low ceilings and poor visibility to make it into the airfield. There were so many locals gazing through the fence line, snapping photo and watching our every move. It was amazing to see that many people interested in what we were doing [for the exercise].”

The RAAF contingent with its C-130J, and the RNZAF aircraft and crew were diverted from the exercise, leaving the two USAF C-17s, one RAAF C-130 and the French CASA 235 to continue with KIWI FLAG and supporting SOUTHERN KATIPO. Despite the reduced numbers and inevitable aircraft maintenance issues, the four aircraft flew 153 hours, carrying 405,000 kg of freight, 1056 passengers and two Military Working Dogs.

The Singapore Detachment Commander, Major Jeff Lee, said the RAAF C-130 achieved 20 sorties and nine aerial cargo drops. “We achieved our overall objectives and in some cases exceeded our own expectations—it’s interactions such as these that enhance our combined effectiveness.”

The Air Component Commander, AIRCdre Mike Yardley, oversaw the exercise, and the RNZAF contribution to the concurrent SOUTHERN KATIPO, from HQ Joint Forces in Trentham. Afterwards, he summarised the lessons learned for Air Force News.

“KIWI FLAG was a very good exercise for the RNZF and visiting crews due to its size and complexity. The withdrawal of the RNZAF and RAAF C-130s for Typhoon Haiyan support created some pressures, but our RNZAF personnel continued to be involved through the command and control of the multi-national air operations and air movement and logistics support.

“In the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC—at Trentham) and the Wing Operations Centre (WOC—at Ohakea) our staffs developed their command and control expertise and air planning skills for the Airlift forces, while also overseeing the tactical support role of the helicopter force deployed to the South Island for SOUTHERN KATIPO.”

The ACC was encouraged by the professional ability and staff skills at CAOC and WOC. “It demonstrated that our training in these areas is good, but we did find C2 gaps where we need to improve.”

The Exercise again showed the importance of interoperability and coordination between our own forces and our allies. “From an air transport perspective, KF and SK13 taught us lessons in load management and prioritisation. It also gave us a better understanding of the rules required by our partner Air Forces and the visiting aircraft’s capabilities and limitations. We also learned lessons in the deployment of our expeditionary support forces: Force Protection, Communications, Refuellers, and Mission Support personnel.

“I observed a tendency to do things in isolation, rather than building a synergy with the other deployed units. We also seemed to set ourselves outside the main planning for SK13. One example was the deployed Air Traffic Control caravan, which is provided by Airways but was driven down to Timaru, when in a real-world setting it should have been flown in as an early, high-priority, load.

“However there was also a disparity between the planning figures for the air movement of units’ personnel and freight, compared with the reality. In SOUTHERN KATIPO there was more freight to go south than anticipated, and we lacked an appropriate holding position at Ohakea. In that specific respect, the new Air Movements Terminal at Ohakea will make a huge difference for similar exercises or operations.

“I can see now that the Air Force should have stood up the CAOC earlier, to assist the Commander Deployable Joint Task Force and his staff with the information needed for his plans.

“Jointly running SK13 and KF in parallel created some confusion with issues of C2 and prioritisation—the key element is the reality of interoperability. A lesson for next time would be to aim for one integrated exercise with one command structure.

“Of course we also had real-world challenges with concurrent operations. The RNZAF was also undertaking the redeployment of the Tongan contingent from Afghanistan, deploying a P-3 and support detachment to Malaysia for the scheduled FPDA exercise, then Typhoon Haiyan came along.

“With SK13 and KF as concurrent and inter-linked exercises, they made up our biggest exercise in a quarter of a century. The USAF C-17s were the key with their lift capability, the Singaporean C-130 provided vital personnel transport and the French CASA made an important contribution.

“It’s been a phenomenal experience to host our multi-national counterparts. We faced a real world natural disaster and various maintenance issues, but in the end that’s what this exercise was about—overcoming obstacles to enable a rapid, responsive, unified force with our partners in the Pacific, and I think we did just that.” ▼
HMNZS TE MANA has spent the Christmas and New Year period in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia conducting counter-piracy operations as part of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151).

CMF is a multi-national naval partnership established to promote maritime security, stability, and prosperity in a large area of international waters. The CMF has overall command of CTF-150, Counter Terrorism/Narcotics/Smuggling, CTF-151, Counter Piracy and CTF-152 which is the Persian Gulf mission. CTF-151 focuses specifically on counter-piracy in the Gulf of Aden region and off the eastern coast of Somalia.

The trade routes from the Red Sea and out to the Indian Ocean are a vital international highway, with the vessels transiting these supply lines being tempting and valuable targets for pirates from Somalia. TE MANA’s deployment to CTF-151 is part of New Zealand’s contribution to international counter-piracy efforts.

The frigate’s versatility and capability are enhanced by the embarked SH-2G Seaspire helicopter, which can carry out a range of missions, in particular to augment the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capacity of the frigate. As an ISR platform, the Seaspire allows for a bigger picture to be gathered in the area of operations (AO).

THE OPERATION

It was a feeling of relief and satisfaction in late November that the three months of training came to an end; we were finally on our way across the Indian Ocean to carry out the job. To signify what the ship had accomplished each member of Ship’s Company was presented with the official deployment patch to wear proudly on their uniform.

During this operation, anything and everything can change at a moment’s notice. We are deployed to influence real world events and protect shipping along the key arterial routes. There is a need to police this area of the world against the threat of piracy.

We have now [mid-January] completed two of our allotted three patrols. TE MANA Flight and our helicopter have racked up 50 sorties, flying nearly 80 hours, 52 in December alone. The majority of these were ISR sorties with over 65 hours of video obtained and sent back to CTF-151 Command—who have remarked that the product that they are receiving from our flights is outstanding.
The team have completed 40 Vertical Replenishments (VERTREPs) bringing on board 11 tons of fresh produce. Nobody would argue that the Flight hasn’t been pulling their weight. The numbers are a testament to our team’s enthusiasm and dedication to the mission.

Keeping the Seasprite flying is our task. Our Air Force careers have brought each of us to No. 6 Squadron, RNZAF, where we maintain the Seasprites for the Navy. During a three-year posting to the Squadron, we may serve on any of the Navy’s helicopter-capable ships.

The naval environment is very different to that of the Air Force, but it has its challenges and also rewards. Being involved with the ship’s exercises and operations allows us to learn new skills such as fire fighting and damage control which are valuable skills not many Air Force personnel would get the opportunity to experience.

One of the biggest challenges onboard was trying to comprehend the Navy’s idiosyncrasies and their language. we have definitely improved our ‘Jackspeak’ proficiency!

We have to be a high performance team—being that we’re the only ones who can fix the helicopter away from our parent base and logistic chain. On any given day, we are servicing the aircraft to ensure the Seasprite is ready to fly and undertake the mission it has been tasked with. The tasks vary from winching, carrying under-slung loads, to Search and Rescue or warfare/ISR sorties.

Although we’re a tight-knit unit within the ship, we are also a significant force multiplier. Because we are an integral part of the frigate’s capabilities we have to think about the big picture and what the ship’s Flight is achieving to meet CTF-151s objectives. Conducting naval helicopter operations halfway round the world in hot, demanding conditions is pushing us to our limits so we have to be at the top of our game.

Life at sea is not all serious. We plan some breaks in our programme for flight deck sports. One light-hearted aspect is our beard-growing—in the words of one, older, sailor, “You have to look like a pirate to catch a pirate!” The beard growing is not common place for RNZAF personnel, as part of integrating with the Navy we have the benefit of donning the naval rig for the majority of the deployment. This in turn allows us to grow beards, those times we’re required to be in the Air Force uniform we will fall back to being clean shaven.

WORK UP

Last year Sydney became our ‘local’ port with eight visits as we progressed through our work up and training.

Participating in the Australian International Fleet Review (IFR) in October, commemorating the centenary of the Royal Australian Navy, was a special experience for our Air Force team. We were a little apprehensive as our Air Force uniforms would set us apart from our Navy brethren; however, the experience was extremely positive with cheers from the crowds and the camaraderie from all the naval personnel taking part in the occasion.

We carried out our final operational work up off Darwin, during early November. That focused on training and assessing the ships company on the specific roles that they would encounter during Operation TIKI VI. For the flight crew this involves locating and prosecuting surface threats and, should the situation dictate, providing cover for the Ship’s Boarding Party as they conduct a search of any vessels of interest.

Being based at Darwin for two weeks gave us time to acclimatise to the heat. This proved to be challenging at first, but proved its worth once we were in the AO. The final stop at Darwin provided us a chance to carry out some much needed maintenance (after the two intense work up periods) to get the Seasprite ready for the task ahead.
FGOFF Nash was posted into the role of Staff Officer Technical Support Armament (SO TS ARM) following his IOTC.

As an ex-Aircraft Technician and now Engineer I saw the opportunity to move into the field of Armament as a new and exciting challenge. It has not disappointed me. In my short time as SO TS ARM I have been involved in a wide range of activities, but most notably two sets of trials.

The first one I was involved in was a ground and flight trial of the A109 gun Mount. The trial was in full swing when I arrived; this meant that I missed most of the documentation generation but was there for the actual trials. The amount of background work that goes into a trial is significant, but when it all comes together in the field with only a few hiccups you can see why that sort of planning is required.

The trial was successful, with the gun mount performing well and I gained an insight into the role of a Trials Officer. I had to learn quickly because it was my turn a month later.

The second was a ground trial for the fit and function of a new wing pylon to be installed on the P-3K2. The new pylon can be fitted at any pylon station with the use of a contoured spacer, replacing the old pylon that could only be used on one specific pylon station. My role as the Trials Officer was to observe the installation, removal and testing of the new pylon, then to write a report on how the trial went.

The trial itself only took two days, in that time the ever professional 5 SQN Armament team managed to install a pylon on all operation stations and test the pylon for functionality.

Leading the trial and writing the reports has been a great learning experience.

Coming into this role straight after graduation from IOTC has been a steep learning curve, but it has also been exciting and very professionally rewarding.

TS ARM is split into two distinct areas:

- TS ARM: configuration management, modifications and clearance of aircraft stores, and
- TS ARM PR: policy and regulation of armament across the RNZAF.

One of TS ARM’s goals is to make sure the RNZAF doesn’t end up on YouTube, where there are others’ videos of bombs, external fuel tanks and other stores striking aircraft from which they were released.

Stores Clearance certification is required when a new store is to be fitted, for an expansion of the flight envelope, or a significant change has been made to an existing store or aircraft. Stores Clearance is a process to make sure safe separation occurs when a store is released or fired from an aircraft. With the introduction of the NH90, A109 and P-3K2, the responsibility of the TS ARM team is to provide guidance on armament issues, liaise with the manufacturers and conduct trials to make sure equipment won’t smash any important bits off the aircraft.

TS ARM is established for only six personnel but is responsible for all Armament technical support across our aircraft fleet and ground units. TS ARM is your ‘one stop...
armament shop’. The TS ARM Armourers have a wealth of experience, including aircraft operations, equipment maintenance, explosives’ storage and ordnance disposal.

**TS ARM PR** is responsible for the armament policy and regulatory environment. This includes providing guidance for small arms and air weapons, general handling and transportation, air and ground ranges, explosive storage and weapons loading areas, explosive ordnance disposal, explosives inspection, radio frequency radiation and laser hazards and anything else related to aviation armament. Noting that it is armament which converts aircraft into combat platforms, it is our role to provide the regulatory framework to ensure that such armament services are provided to the RNZAF in a safe manner.

An important part of our role is to ensure that our procedures comply with NZ legislation and allied military standards and agreements.

We maintain a close association with NZ Army, RNZN and the Defence Munition Management Group, weapons and explosives experts. We try to standardise our policy and regulations to improve interoperability and optimise efficiencies within the NZDF and with allied forces.

However, we still need to ensure that we meet the needs of RNZAF Force Elements first and foremost. With our military aviation systems and requirements we often have to use foreign military aviation standards, or develop our own standards to ensure safety in the armament environment.

**WHERE WE FIT:**

We are part of the Directorate of Continued Airworthiness Management DCAM(OH) which is a sub-directorate of the Directorate of Engineering Technical Airworthiness (DETA) (headed by GPCAPT Ian Mower, Technical Airworthiness Authority).

DCAM’s primary focus is to provide independent control and authority on airworthiness issues, and manage configuration and modifications to our existing and new aircraft.

Technical Support Armament and Safety and Surface (TS ARM/S&S) are Configuration Management roles.
‘Fresh off the boat’ as a new lateral recruit from the UK, FLTLT Willis was posted as Staff Officer Safety Equipment in October 2012.

I found myself working in an area of equipment in which I had no previous experience (no different to any other military organisation around the world!) so my learning curve over the past year has been pretty steep. As the Staff Officer managing the configuration and modification teams within TS S&S, I was thrown head first into the airworthiness management of the vast range of S&S equipment in use across the organisation.

As an example within my first month the section was dealing with a safety check of all life preservers in the RNZAF. Fondly remembered by the cell as NZ sMI Friday (five NZ Safety Management Instructions were issued in the one day) it was certainly a crash course in the formal engineering processes as well as an opportunity to see first hand how the S&S trade can work exceptionally well as a team when the pressure is on!

Having to learn the RNZAF language (and I thought the Kiwi language barrier was bad enough) and engineering change processes, as well as about our many customers, certainly made the hours in the office fly by. Perhaps unique to this organisation is the breadth of responsibilities—on occasions I have scurried home with my head spinning: tandem parachutes introduction to service, life raft inflation cylinder hydrostatic testing standards, and water filters in survival packs, for example.

Whilst it has been a challenge it has been thoroughly enjoyable working with a small and dedicated team as we respond to changing organisational needs, to support the equipment that is ultimately there to save lives.

The variety of equipment and pan-platform nature of our support does make it a very demanding role, but I would certainly recommend the post to any Engineer who enjoys variety and the opportunity to work with a large and varied customer base. (Those with no sense of humour should not apply!)

The TS S&S Cell covers technical support for Safety Equipment and Aircraft Finishing. The TS Cell is not platform-specific; rather, it deals with all aircraft platforms and some external agencies including the Army and the Navy. TS S&S is divided into three distinct areas:

**Modifications.** This area looks after all introduction to service of new equipment, inclusive of ‘through life support’ and upgrade of in-service items. The modification process is a system that applies the right level of Operational and Technical airworthiness in order to achieve a safe and effective outcome. An important part of the process is ensuring that both Operational and Technical Wings work together to achieve
the desired result. Currently the "Mod Squad" have 29 modifications on their books at various stages in the process.

**Configuration Management.** Many issues are investigated by maintainers, aircrew or other agencies, frequently. The introduction of the NH90 and A109 have significantly added to our workload. Issues range from part numbers or obsolete parts to scheduling challenges. Another main function of the Configuration Section is actioning publication and drawing amendments. The cell manages around 280 Safety Equipment publications, which results in a steady flow of publication updates.

**Aircraft Finishing.** Painting issues do arise and can cause long delays—Southern Hemisphere conditions differ to those in the Northern Hemisphere and so paint characteristics and composition may differ. Our cell is currently assessing the different coatings used on the A109 and NH90 aircraft.

TS S&S is driven to achieve specific timeframes, but if delays occur, there will be a reason—rest assured the cogs will be turning in the background to get it done!

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**CONTACT US!**

TS ARM and TS S&S are 'pan-platform' so we have workloads that have to be prioritised across all our aircraft types. To facilitate scheduling, both cells have now introduced the technical query process to log requests and provide transparency to end users.

Technical query forms can be found on the RNZAF internal DCAM website address: http://org/air-dlog/DACPages/DACDocuments.aspx

Or contact our friendly team for a form to be sent to you.

For technical questions / jobs required from the cells please send them through to respective emails using the technical query forms:

TS ARM: OH TS ARM@nzdf.mil.nz

TS S&S: OH TS S&S@nzdf.mil.nz

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When I joined the Air Force as a fresh-faced 16 year-old, I had no thought that 27 years later I would have achieved a successful career and risen to the rank of Warrant Officer.

I have seen many changes to the Air Force along the way. Initially, I joined as an Accounts Clerk. The Accounts Trade was disbanded in 1998; back then we just got notified that this was happening through a signal and told the trades we could choose to remuster to were either Logistics or Admin. In fact many others chose trades other than those, some were commissioned, and most went on to have successful RNZAF careers.

I chose to trade change to Admin as I wanted to continue working in the finance and payroll area. As it turned out, the Admin Trade was also disbanded under the Support Trade Rationalisation Project so now I am a General Service Airwoman (GSA).

The many changes in our Air Force have kept me interested, challenged and motivated. Change can be disruptive and bring uncertainty, but can also stimulate growth and innovation when channelled in the right direction. Leading change has been a challenge for me in our Air Force. I see passion and dedication to duty every day in our people. To lead or facilitate change—such as the Support Trade Rationalisation, or the recent ‘civilianisation’ change—when they affect people and their futures, has tested my strength and resilience.

In 2007 I deployed to East Timor for seven months (TG Gyro, OP KORU). Being away from your family for that length of time can be hard. It was no different for me, being away from my two sons for such a long time with minimal contact. Fortunately, they were well taken care of and that gave me strength to see out the deployment. On the flip side the deployment was rewarding; observing and contributing to the good we were doing to help the Timorese people. It was bittersweet to say goodbye to Timor and to be going home.

There are some things that change beyond our control, however we can control how we react and behave in response to change. When faced with such uncertainty I have chosen to adapt to change and seek new opportunities each time. Probably the most challenging role I have had was being W/O Admin when the Personnel Admin Review was implemented and we moved to a centralised Admin Centre—Air Admin.

Subsequently, I was appointed the Command Warrant Officer for 488 Wing. I see this as an opportunity for me to shape the leadership and strategic role the Command Warrant Officer can offer to our Air Force.

Taking opportunities is important; I quite like this quote: “To Optimist, Pessimist and Realist—while you were arguing about the glass of water, I drank it! From the Opportunist.”
Seven pilots graduated from the 11/2 Advanced Wings Course at Ohakea on 24 January. L–R: PLTOFF Matthew Comber, from Wellington; PLTOFF Tim Jones, Christchurch; FGOFF David Natapu, Auckland; PLTOFF Ben James, Wellington; FLTLT Byron Wagstaff, Dunedin; FGOFF Lindsay Johnstone, Christchurch; and PLTOFF Simon McKay, Masterton.

CPL Aaron Oxenham is one of our CIS technicians in No. 230 Sqn at Base Auckland. 2014 will see him and his colleagues busy ensuring communications connectivity for our units on various exercises.

WGCDR Nealis(DMED F) and FLTLT K Boyes presented CPL Emma Hackett with the ‘Top Medic in the RNZAF’ trophy on 17 December. The Top Medic award is an initiative to recognise excellence in the RNZAF Medical Trade; previously there had been no formal acknowledgement for those Medics who demonstrate excellent skills and attributes.

On 29 January 1200 Cadets paraded at Waiouru Military Camp before the Governor-General. There were 16 ATC platoons on parade, along with nine of Army Cadets, four of Sea Cadets and three additional mixed platoons. AFNews will include a report on the Cadets’ Anniversary Exercise next month.
Christopher Roblett of 22 Sqn (City of Upper Hutt) was awarded his second Clasp to the NZ Cadet Forces Medal, by the British Deputy High Commissioner Patrick Reilly. In 1981, FLT Roblett commissioned into the RAF Volunteer Reserve, Training Branch and served with the ATC in the UK. He subsequently emigrated to NZ and after gaining his NZ citizenship he was commissioned into the NZCF. Last year he passed 28 years’ total service to the ATC in both the UK and NZ.

On 20 January, the Lego-compatible jubilux Battle Planes were the best-selling toy before Christmas at the AF Museum shop.


HQ 485 WG at Base Auckland celebrated Christmas by donating various gifts for all age groups to the Salvation Army’s “Wishing Tree” appeal. L–R: W/O Kevin Otto CWO 485 WG, Mrs Sonia Graham 485 COORD & Major Peter Roberts, Salvation Army.

Air Force Museum Exhibitions Technician Alex Rutherford working on the construction of the “Captured!” exhibition space.
Public Perception

HOW THE RNZAF IS PERCEIVED

A 2013 survey across 7000 New Zealanders in the work force shows that the RNZAF is seen as an attractive employer, competitive with similar organisations, and ahead of many Kiwi companies. The Randstad Report also illuminates some of the very practical factors that encourage staff retention and build a positive work atmosphere.

Randstad New Zealand conducts its annual online survey across the top (based on employee size) 150 organisations in NZ. Seven thousand people responded, aged from 18 – 65, with the main group being 25 – 59 year olds. A majority of the respondents had a tertiary education at either polytech or university.

Paul Robinson, the Director of Randstad NZ (and who is ex-Air Force himself) explains that the value of the ‘employer brand’ is that it helps a company or organisation attract the right talent, achieve good retention and retain a high quality work force, as well be more efficient in recruiting. A valued ‘employer brand’ is linked to a highly skilled work force, satisfied customers and business success.

When people are seeking employment or considering a job change, the five major factors that they consider are:
• competitive salary and benefits
• long term job security
• working atmosphere
• interesting job content, and
• work-life balance.

In addition, males (somewhat more than females) look for clear career progression opportunities, while females value (somewhat more than males) flexible working arrangements. Of course career progression is inherent within RNZAF, while flexible working arrangements are common; these are factors we can all share with anyone who may be a potential recruit.

Strong brand awareness is very important. ‘Name awareness’ of an organisation is a useful starting point; inevitably retail enterprises dominate: The Warehouse, McDonalds, Telecom, Air New Zealand and Vodaphone are at the top. However, the NZ Police (at number 7) and Inland Revenue (number 15) are also up in the top 20.

Being aware of an organisation’s name is not the full story; is it perceived as being attractive to work for? The top two are Air NZ and TVNZ, with the Department of Conservation listed at Number 5.

More important though is the ‘relative attractiveness’, derived from those who know the company and would also like to work for that company. The top three in that case are: Air NZ, NZ Customs and the Department of Conservation.

The RNZAF sits, along with the Navy and the Army, in the ‘Public Administration and Safety’ sector for this survey, which includes the Police, Fire Service and Customs. Relative to the other two Services, the Air Force is perceived more favourably, although that is by only a slim margin—all three Services are grouped quite closely.

Our own ‘name awareness’ increased in this survey from the previous year, and our relative attractiveness was more highly rated by males than females. The Air Force was more attractive to 25 – 39 year olds and also more attractive to those with degrees. Interestingly we were very much more attractive to those in the South Island (perhaps South Islanders are looking for employment opportunities in the North Island). Overall the Randstad survey underlines that the RNZAF is widely perceived as an attractive organisation to join.

A productive team?

For those of us within the Air Force, the value of this Survey is the assessment of those factors which make for a happy and productive work force and enhance retention:
• a pleasant working atmosphere;
• work-life balance;
• interesting job content;
• career progression, and
• training.

The Ranstad surveys show that staff retention is supported by four main factors:
• a pleasant working atmosphere,
• long-term job security,
• interesting job content, and
• a competitive salary.

Work-life balance becomes an important factor for people who may be considering leaving.

Many of these factors are within the control of managers and leaders at all levels. For example, a pleasant work atmosphere is a result of:
• open and honest communication;
• that personnel feel part of a team;
• there is recognition for good work;
• respect from colleagues, and
• a sense of shared commitment.

As well, ‘fun and laughter at work’ is also valued.

Three other factors that are also within the control of unit and section managers and leaders, are:
• ‘my ideas are valued’
• there is variation in the job, and
• ‘I have independence to get on with the job.’

Of course some factors, such as salary, may be set for us, but this survey highlights that many of the most important factors for our staff are within the control of our leaders and managers throughout the RNZAF.

The survey shows that the RNZAF is well perceived across the NZ workforce. Therefore we can all proudly share the positive aspects of our organisation, not only to those who may want to join, but also to those within the Air Force who may be thinking of leaving.
Interoperability

ASIC—AEROSPACE MEDICINE WORKING GROUP MEETING IN WELLINGTON

By FLTLT Sean Goodwin

New Zealand hosts annual Air and Space Interoperability Council (ASIC) meetings in turn with our American, Australian, British and Canadian allies.

In mid-November 2013, the Aerospace Medical Working Group (ASMG) met in Wellington. This is the first time the group has convened for its annual meeting in NZ since 2008 and it was a great opportunity to host our allies in the nation’s capital. Engagement with ASIC ASMG allows the RNZAF to tap into a wide range of knowledge and operational experience that cannot easily be gained within the NZDF.

After a fantastic whakatau (welcome) the meeting began with each delegate updating their country’s progress and challenges over the previous 12 months. Whilst all of the nation’s briefs were very different, recurring themes included fiscal restraint and the implications of the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

During the meeting 42 documents were reviewed, with subjects ranging from aero medical evacuation to aircrew malaria prophylaxis; some will be updated, some cancelled and some archived. At the same time, the on-going projects were reviewed to ensure they are tracking on their timelines.

There was much discussion about the efforts of the five nations to improve the processes for ‘credentialing’ and equipment interoperability. Credentialing is the process of recognising the medical qualifications and skills of foreign clinicians to allow them to practice legally in another country. The continuing work in these two areas could lead to a situation where, as an example, future casualties could be evacuated whilst in the care of New Zealand clinicians utilising Canadian equipment on an American aircraft.

The delegates were given the opportunity to visit the EOD SQN and medical stores in Trentham, and were briefed by J1 Health. The medication pre-pack section at Medical Stores is unique to the NZDF. It allows clinicians to legally dispense medications without a pharmacist nearby. In the future, this system, with the addition of translated labels, may have high value in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

During the meeting the RNZAF was offered many opportunities for future engagement with our principal allies. It was agreed that all delegates would gather the lessons and interoperability challenges identified during the Typhoon Haiyan into a single repository for analysis. At the completion of the agenda, DCAF was briefed on the outcomes of the meeting and future work streams. The next meeting will be hosted by Australia in 2014.

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CURRENT ASMG PROJECTS

- Hearing Protection
- Operational Risk Analysis of Aeromedical Evacuation (AE)
- Aircrew and Aircraft First Aid Kits
- Aircrew Medical Examinations
- National Aeromedical SME Database
- Airfield Medical Cover
- Management Of Mental Health Issues In Aircrew (Pharmacological And Non-Pharmacological)
- Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Medical Standards.
- Recognition of Professional Credentialing
- Patient Tracking
- Aircrew Medical Standards
- Fatigue Countermeasures In Sustained Air Operations
- Tactical/Forward Aeromedical Evacuation - Continuity Of Care
- Aeromedical Evacuation (AE) of Highly Infectious Individuals
- Interchangeability of Aeromedical Equipment

The Aerospace Medical Working Group in Parliament’s grounds
THE AIR FORCE NOHO MARAE – WE WANT YOU!

By Doug ‘Wal’ Wallace, Defence RNZAF Ohakea

Some believe that the Air Force Noho Marae program (marae stayover) is the domain of senior command only. This was true only for the first few Noho Marae that followed the initial one in 2008 for CAF and the Leadership Board of the time. The intent back then was to provide cultural awareness training to our senior leadership. The Noho Marae addressed that directly—by immersing our personnel in the essence of the marae environment. The result? An experience not to be missed, according to those who have done it.

WGCDR Pete Franken: The Noho Marae experience can be felt in the renewed bond that I feel with my own organisation. I have been reacquainted with this feeling by weaving high expectations and shared goals with a cultural element of belonging. I feel a stronger bond with my Air Force now than I have ever felt in the past.

Most across the Air Force gain some cultural awareness training on their promotion courses. But now our philosophy is for all-rank participation, because the RNZAF expects leadership across the full spectrum of rank—and the tools to lead are being made available to all prepared to wield them.

The mystery surrounding the Noho Marae has gone; the recent one held in December 2013 was testament to this. Participants ranged from WGCDR to Ac and included W/Os, FSGTs, OCDTs, a SQNLD and a GSH.

OCDT Arianan Osborne: The Noho Marae was an amazing learning experience. Through Mr Wallace’s tutorage, all participants were able to develop new skills; it felt effortless to learn formerly foreign concepts, and we now have skills that we can transfer to our workplaces.

So, what is the Air Force Noho Marae experience? It’s a cultural awareness development program designed to give participants the tools for the basics of kōrero (speaking) in the Māori environment or context. It is a residential program which includes two nights on the marae to give personnel the full marae experience (including snorers)! Previous experience is not required, just an open mind and the desire to learn something new and exciting.

F/S Nathaniel Goza: I found the Noho Marae an outstanding experience. Everything was taught in such a way where you actually understand what you need to say even if you have little knowledge of Te Reo. This experience has given me the confidence to stand on a paepae and deliver a basic whaikōrero.

SQNLDR Jen Atkinson: For me the initial focus of the Noho Marae was to be more comfortable speaking Māori and understanding tikanga—but I also found myself reminded as to why I joined a family like the RNZAF and how great the people in our organisation are. The openness of both the teachers and students made learning easy, and the space so comfortable that hard questions could be posed. Wal made us feel like we were at our home away from home. At the end I left feeling that the RNZAF Marae was truly my Marae.

By being ‘on the marae’, far more lessons are learned through osmosis than can be listed here. Some things can’t be taught, they have to be experienced—the Noho Marae is such.

Tirohia kia marama. Whawhangia kia rangona te hā! Observe to gain enlightenment. Participate to feel the essence!

The next Noho Marae will take place 06 – 08 March. Others will be advertised in Base Bulletins. Keep your calendar clear and watch for the advert (or jump the queue and email Doug ‘Wal’ Wallace to reserve your spot now!). Nau mai, haere mai Everybody welcome!
On Monday 25th November, a ceremony took place at the Command and Staff College, Trentham, to formally name the College’s library The Mitchell Research Library, in honour of GPCAPT Ivan Reid Mitchell OBE, DFC, the first Commandant of the College.

GPCAPT Mitchell played an instrumental role in establishing the RNZAF’s Command and Staff School and was Officer Commanding at the College from 1957 to 1960, and again from 1962 to 1964. He was a firm believer in encouraging students to engage in analytical discussions about contemporary topics, and embraced the concept of members of all three Services attending the College, as well as members of overseas military forces, an ethos that continues to this day. Furthermore, as the naming plaque states, ‘it is acknowledged that it is GPCAPT Mitchell’s vision that has shaped the strategic direction of the College’s courses.’

GPCAPT Mitchell’s own career began in Coastal Command during WWII, when he flew HUDSons with No. 500 Sqn RAF. He won the DFC during these operations, before being posted as a navigation instructor on the Commonwealth Air Training Plan in Canada.

He later flew Dakotas with No 41 Sqn RNZAF and after the war one highlight for him was leading the NZ Contingent to the Queen’s Coronation in 1953, where he was also selected to be one of four New Zealanders in the Sovereign’s Mounted Escort.

He instructed at the RNZAF Officers’ School before establishing the RNZAF Command and Staff College. In 1960 he was awarded the OBE to recognise his work for both Officer initial training and with the Staff college.

Ten members of GPCAPT Mitchell’s family, representing three generations, made the journey to Trentham from as far afield as Auckland and Gisborne. It was particularly heart-warming for the College staff to see the family’s pleasure and gratitude that GPCAPT Mitchell was honoured in this manner, and a number of fascinating and amusing stories were related to the staff about his personal and professional life, all of which helped provide a fuller picture of the man who played such a pivotal role in making the College what it is today.

The Chief of Air Force led the formal naming ceremony for the Library.
FLTLT Joe Tasker was at the heart of a successful search and rescue operation in Bass Strait, north of Tasmania, on 28 October 2013. Joe, from Morrinsville, is posted to RAAF East Sale (Victoria) as an Air Warfare Instructor, where he teaches Australian and New Zealand Air Force officers in the techniques of contemporary air warfare—that is, the tactical coordination of aircraft in their various combat roles. That day, Joe was the instructor aboard an RAAF Beech King Air, undertaking maritime patrol training over Bass Strait.

At the same time, two men were flying from Tasmania north to Flinders Island in an ultra-light Thruster 500 private plane. But engine trouble forced them to ditch. The pilot, Shayed Hector, raised the alarm by cell phone to Airservices Australia [the equivalent of CAA in New Zealand]. Their aircraft went down near Waterhouse Island, 20 nautical miles south-west of Flinders Island.

Mr Hector said afterwards that his plane flipped and ‘exploded into pieces’ on contact with the water. “Once we hit, we were upside down in the water in the plane, then we pretty much swam our way out” he told reporters. The men had been instructed to set off an emergency beacon and don life jackets; they also had an air mattress on board as an emergency flotation device.

The search and rescue centre, Melbourne Centre, tasked two civilian aircraft to search; one, a Metroliner, came down to 1500 feet but the crew could not see anything. Another light plane was unable to help. Melbourne Centre asked Joe’s aircraft if they could help. The aircraft, under the command of FGOFF M Hanson RAAF, accepted the task and transited to the search datum.

FLTLT Tasker explained that “I was the instructor running the scenario and assessing the two students in a maritime patrol scenario. We had completed most of our training and I was about to give the students a SAR scenario when the real SAR commenced.

“When it all kicked off I reacted in the same way I would have on an Orion. I acted as the Mission Commander, not only to complete a safe and efficient search but to demonstrate this to the students to assist them in their training.”

The King Air approached the search area at 4000ft but when overhead could not obtain a visual sighting. Joe, as Mission Commander, arranged a height swap with the Metroliner so that his aircraft could conduct low level operations to obtain visual contact.

“I allowed the students to continue to conduct Air Combat Officer (ACO) duties within the aircraft and just oversaw their progress and coordinated tasks within our aircraft and the other aircraft in the area.”

Once at 1000ft the crew obtained visual on an object. They overflew it and believed it might be a life raft with people on board, however from that height they were uncertain. Joe directed the aircraft to descend to 500 feet but the crew still could not positively identify the floating object. They recorded an accurate position of the object and re-positioned to fly past at 250ft. At that height they could see the life raft and two passengers (with life vests) who were both waving at the aircraft.

“The students continued to conduct ACO and visual observer roles. They calmly, collectively and accurately fulfilled these roles, including spotting the flotation device and
identifying the two survivors on it. The details were reported to
Melbourne Centre.”

Joe’s crew then had two options, to watch for 40 minutes
before returning to East Sale, or stay on station for 95 minutes,
using Launceston. Melbourne Centre requested that they remain on-station for as long as possible, as rescue support
would take another hour to arrive.

“Melbourne Centre was asked to contact RAAF East Sale and
advise them of our task and intentions.”

The Ambulance Victoria helicopter, ‘Rescue341’, arrived
after an hour and the King Air handed over the SAR to them.
Tasmania Police boat rescue had also responded and their craft
was by then about a mile away; they picked the men out of the
water. Rescue 341 then winched the men aboard at about 5pm
to fly them to Launceston, where the two men were treated for
hypothermia (the water was only 13°C).

The ultra-light pilot said later “It was that cold in the water,
we went into a bit of a frenzy and our bodies were just shaking,
quite drastic.”

Reflecting on the incident, FLTLT Tasker said his students were
excited to be a part of a real SAR.

“They valued the lessons they learnt from a dynamic real
world scenario and we were all happy and relieved that the
survivors were safely recovered. Overall, this was an excellent
effort by the pilots of No. 32 Sqn and the students from the
School of Air Warfare (SAW). This event helps to show that
the training sorties conducted at SAW do realistically prepare
Acos for real world operations.

“I have been in the RNZAF for 10 years. During that time I
have been operating P-3K Orions for seven and half years and
have taken part in over 25 Search and Rescue operations. I
am currently completing a three year posting to SAW, which
has allowed me to complete my QAI [Qualified Air Warfare
Instructor] qualification and gain experience training ab-intio
students, before I return to instruct in New Zealand.”

SQNLDR Mike Cunningham with allied officers

EX EQUATEUR 2013 PACIFIC TIES STRENGTHENED

Ex EQUATOR 2013 in Noumea, New Caledonia, was a
command post exercise involving Australia, Canada,
France, Japan, NZ, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, UK and
Vanuatu. The exercise is a lead-in to Ex CROIX DU SUD planned
for later this year as a field training exercise involving all three
services. Both exercises are part of the global training process
for the operational preparation of the French armed forces in
New Caledonia (FANC).

The exercises are designed to practice Humanitarian Aid
Disaster Relief (HADR) actions; as well, the exercises serve to
strengthen military cooperation between regional partners. The
French are keen to improve military cooperation between the
French forces of the Pacific, regional and Asian partners as well
as NATO, on the basis of common operational interests such as
humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

Taking part for the RNZAF were SQNLDR Mike Cunningham
and FGOFF Sarah Potter. FGOFF Potter said, “It’s a great
insight for junior officers into the running of an exercise at the
operational level. The size and capability of participants in New
Caledonia is big enough that you have sufficient resources to
play around with but not so big that it’s overwhelming.”
On 07 November last year, at a special ceremony in the Officers’ Mess at Whenuapai, the New Zealand Bomber Command Association presented a memorial trophy to the Chief of Air Force. On accepting the Memorial Trophy, AVM Stockwell commented that in today’s Air Force, while the hardware may be different, the same dedication as shown by the bomber crews of WWII is required and expected.

“This magnificent trophy will become one of the premier awards in the RNZAF and will be competed for by operational squadrons to achieve excellence in performance,” he said.

The presentation service was attended by 20 Bomber Command veterans, along with friends and family. NZBCA President Ron Mayhill noted in his speech that the challenges faced by the air crews of 70 years ago remain the same today, and only the very best standards of service are good enough. The statue was blessed by RNZAF Chaplain SQRNLR Leader Anthony Hawes.

The idea of a Memorial Trophy was originally proposed by NZBCA Patron Sir Richard Bolt during the veterans’ London trip, as an appreciation to the RNZAF. The idea was developed within the Association and Weta Workshops was asked to design a statue.

The statue shows a WWII bomber crewman in full battle dress—parachute harness, mae west and oxygen mask—just returned from a raid over Germany, thinking of his mates lost during that raid, but showing his determination to carry on. Businessman Ian Kuperus provided practical and financial support to the concept and the design was then cast in bronze and mounted on an engraved totara plinth.

Sir Richard Bolt, himself a Bomber Command veteran, said in a message that, “The men we remember were serving members of the RNZAF who were called upon to operate in Bomber Command; probably the largest RNZAF contribution of aircrew to serve in any single campaign in the war. Sadly almost a third of them were lost doing what had to be done. If our trophy can remind future generations of RNZAF personnel of this hugely significant part of our service history, then all our veterans will be very well pleased.”

The Association members feel that this presentation to the RNZAF is an appropriate conclusion to the memorable events of the past 18 months.

• In 2012 New Zealand WWII RAF Bomber Command veterans were enabled to travel to London and witness the unveiling and dedication of the Bomber Command Memorial by HM The Queen.

New Zealand’s Veterans’ Affairs led the project which resulted in more than 30 veterans being escorted as an official party headed by the CAF [see AF News 139 August 2012]. The Bomber Command memorial has since become London’s most visited historical monument, and its designer, Philip Jackson, has been honoured for his work.

• To honour those who were unable to travel (remembering the youngest was 85) Veterans’ Affairs staged a national commemorative service at the National War Memorial, followed by a parliamentary luncheon.

At the service, the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence both acknowledged the dedicated service to this country of the 6000 New Zealanders who served in Bomber Command—and the loss of 1851 young men ‘killed on air operations’.

The generous sponsorship of New
Zealander Ian Kuperus enabled six ex-RAF Bomber Command veterans to travel to London and see the new memorial, as their Kiwi crew mates had done three months earlier.

- Following years of complaint that Bomber Command crews had never received recognition, 2013 saw the announcement that there would be a Bomber Command Clasp to attach to the 1939-45 Star.

A special Arctic Star was also approved for HM Forces, including Bomber and Coastal Command personnel and merchant seamen, who served above the Arctic Circle.

As part of the annual Commonwealth Bomber Command Memorial Parade in Auckland last June, 12 former aircrew were chosen to represent the 200 surviving veterans and were presented with their clasps by RNZAF representative WGCDR Lisa d’Olivera.

So far, 73 living RNZAF veterans and 23 widows have been issued with the Bomber Command Clasp. The NZDF Medals Office is now accepting applications from family members of deceased veterans.

For information on how to apply see http://medals.nzdf.mil.nz/

Overall, the last 18 months have seen a welcome recognition of the men of Bomber Command. With the presentation of the new trophy we hope it will keep alive the memories and spirit of Bomber Command and that our achievements will continue to inspire the men and women of today’s RNZAF.

The Air Power Development Centre, in partnership with the Centre for Defence and Security Studies at Massey University, sponsored Dr Christopher Paul to give a lecture, titled Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies, at Ohakea in early November. The audience comprised a wide spectrum of Base Ohakea staff, including OC 488 Wing and the Commander and Command W/O of 1(NZ) Brigade.

Dr Paul is a well established academic at the RAND Institute in the USA, and an engaging presenter. He earned his PhD in sociology from UCLA and his research interests include Asymmetric Warfare; Civil Military Relations; Counterterrorism; Cyber Warfare; Information Operations; Military Intelligence; Program Evaluation; and Psychological Warfare.

Dr Paul led a team of four researchers who conducted a study of 79 separate insurgencies that were started and concluded during the period 1945-2010. The aim of the inquiry was to determine the counter-insurgency (COIN) approaches and practices that have proven most—and least—successful, to inform the conduct of future COIN operations in the 21st Century.

Their study of 30 insurgencies, 1978-2008, was published in 2010 under the title Victory has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency. Their follow-up project expanded the analysis to 71 cases and was published in 2013 as Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies. [Both books are available through the Defence Library system.]

The wealth of data produced by these studies, including a concise narrative summary for each insurgency examined, is available to the public through the RAND webpage and provides a rich source for academic research and study by military professionals.

The findings hold important messages for air power practitioners. The studies show that the possession and use of uncontested air dominance by forces conducting COIN operations is not a predictor of success or failure. That may be a disconcerting conclusion for air power advocates; however, it does not mean that air power can’t make a meaningful, perhaps even decisive, contribution.

Paths to Victory identifies four concepts that every winning COIN campaign demonstrated:

- commitment and motivation on the part of the Government against which the insurgency is directed;
- the reduction of tangible support for the insurgents;
- flexibility and adaptability on the part of the COIN forces; and
- that the COIN forces enjoyed at least two of the following: unity of effort, the initiative, and intelligence support.

Clearly, air power can contribute to success through its inherent flexibility and the effective execution of its key roles—sense, move and engage—in support of COIN operations.

This lecture demonstrated the value of the relationship between the NZDF and Massey University for the professional development of members of the RNZAF. Dr Paul was presented a copy of Fighting Spirit by GPCAPT Darren Webb, as a token of appreciation for his thought-provoking presentation.
"For you the War is over."

This phrase, heard by the approximately 450 RNZAF airmen captured in Nazi-occupied Europe during WWII, marked the beginning of their new lives as prisoners of war (POWs). This required adjusting to life ‘behind the wire’, surviving on limited rations, dealing with difficult living conditions and coping with boredom.

Captured! is the latest permanent exhibition to open at our Air Force Museum. It follows the journey of a POW, revealing what it was like to be shot down, captured, interrogated and imprisoned. The exhibition gives an insight into life in a POW camp, describing escape attempts, forced marches and eventual liberation, through the eyes of those who experienced them. Much of the content has been sourced from original POW letters, diaries and photographs held in the Museum’s archive.

Captured! has been designed as an engaging, interactive experience, which will help people of all ages understand the experiences of New Zealand airmen captured in Europe during the War. Visitors to the exhibition can take their own POW mug shot, lie on a ‘bug-infested’ bed, listen to secret radio broadcasts and even make their own ‘escape’ through a hidden door.

A companion exhibition focusing on POWs in South-East Asia and the Pacific is planned for the near future.

Do you have an Air Force POW story in your family?

The Museum’s research team is gathering personal accounts of prisoners of war during WWII to further our knowledge and understanding of the RNZAF POW experience. We are interested in collections, stories and information which relate to capture and life in a POW camp through to repatriation and beyond. We are especially interested in how ex-POWs re-adjusted to their normal lives once they were ‘de-mobbed’.

If you have a POW story to tell or related artefacts to donate, please contact the research team by email at research@airforcemuseum.co.nz
On 27 April 1942, Flight Sergeant Keith Gregory of Dunedin was the second pilot of a Halifax bomber from No. 10 Squadron RAF which took part in a raid on the German battleship Tirpitz, near Trondheim in Norway. Gregory’s aircraft was one of 5 shot down; his was hit by heavy fire from the ship’s guns and with its starboard wing ablaze, ditched in the sea in Asen Fjord. As it hit the water, Gregory was thrown from the cockpit with the force of the impact and down into the navigator’s compartment below, hitting his head as he fell. He was knocked unconscious, but recovered in time to crawl through the escape hatch before the aircraft sank. With the rubber dinghy having been destroyed in the attack, Gregory and the four other surviving crew members floated in the sea for a few minutes before being “fished out” by German anti-aircraft gunners. Had they not been captured so quickly, the men would not have survived long in the freezing Arctic water.

This captioned photograph from a German newspaper shows Gregory, with his head wounds already bandaged, being escorted onto shore by his captors. The caption (translated) reads, “Just brought from the water – a flyer from a shot-down British machine steps raging to the land, watched by German anti-aircraft soldiers.” A copy of this photo was sent by Gregory to his mother in Dunedin while he was imprisoned in POW camp Stalag Luft III.

Next month sees the 70th anniversary of ‘The Great Escape’ from Stalag Luft III. AF News March will feature the stories of the Kiwis involved with this bold but tragic attempt.
The RNZAF Band this month is undertaking its annual tour with some of New Zealand’s leading musicians.

This year’s tour and dates are split into two different programmes:

- the Summertime Sounds concerts with international opera stars Dame Malvina Major and Geoff Sewell, and
- our own concerts with one of New Zealand’s most acclaimed pianists, Diedre Irons.

The RNZAF Band will provide the grand finale to the Summertime Sounds concerts in New Plymouth, Hamilton, Taupo, and Martinborough. [The Navy Band will take over for the Gisborne and Auckland Summertime Sounds concerts.]

The large outdoor concerts, with the Hamilton County Bluegrass Band, Hogsnort Rupert and Titanium, will give significant exposure for our Band to audiences around the North Island. It is an exciting collaboration for us!

Our second program with pianist Diedre Irons will take the band to Auckland, Tauranga and Rotorua. Diedre was thrilled to be invited to perform Gershwin’s famous Rhapsody in Blue, a work that includes flavours of both classical and jazz.

The Band will also present works featuring some of our own outstanding musicians. LAC Darren Mathiassen is also the drummer for internationally renowned Kiwi band Shapeshifter. Working with some of the top artists in New Zealand and Australia he is considered one of the finest drummers in the country. He is presently preparing to perform on the Australian Big Day Out tour with Multi-platinum ARIA award-winning Aussie Hip Hop crew Bliss n Eso.

From a more classical perspective, LAC Byron Newton will perform the comic work, Bravura on Euphonium. Byron is gaining international attention as a euphonium soloist following his graduation with a Masters in Music from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama with 100%—the first student in its history to do so.

We are also looking forward to presenting our other works, such as the theme from the movie Skyfall, jazz standards like Someone to Watch Over Me and to repeat The Firebird Suite that was so impressive at last year’s Proms. We know we will be representing the RNZAF to a wide audience; we aim to have something in our programmes for everyone.
Air Force Band

THE BAND’S SUMMER TOUR

08 February
RNZAF Band with Dame Malvina Major and Geoff Sewell
TSB Bowl of Brooklands, New Plymouth
Tickets from ticketmaster.co.nz **

18 February
RNZAF Band with Diedre Irons, Performing Arts Centre, Massey High School
Tickets $25/$20/$10 from ticketek.co.nz

19 February
RNZAF Band with Diedre Irons, Baycourt Theatre, Tauranga.
Tickets $25/$20/$10 from ticketek.co.nz

20 February
RNZAF Band with Diedre Irons, Civic Theatre, Rotorua
Tickets $25/$20/$10 from ticketmaster.co.nz

21 February
RNZAF Band with Dame Malvina Major and Geoff Sewell, Hamilton Gardens
Tickets from iTicket.co.nz **

22 February
RNZAF Band with Dame Malvina Major and Geoff Sewell, Taupo Amphitheatre
Tickets from iTicket.co.nz **

01 March
RNZAF Band with Dame Malvina Major and Geoff Sewell, Alana Estate, Martinborough
Tickets from iTicket.co.nz **

** Special discount offer for concerts with Dame Malvina Major for NZDF personnel, friends & families.
Booking code – SPITFIRE.
Ticket Price $49 (that’s $30 discount— plus usual booking fees through www.iTICKET.CO.NZ
wwwsummertimesounds.co.nz
On 14 December, as the photo shows, 40 Sqn Engineer W/O Campbell Wilson handed the Loadmasters’ challenge trophy back to its ‘rightful owners’, the 40 Sqn Loadmasters, here represented by C-130 Air Loadmaster Leader W/O Pauline Carson.

The trophy had been hard to win back—after the Loadmasters lost the challenge to the Engineers in 2012 (in a home brew competition!) Destry [SGT Tumataiki] decided that the Taupo Half Ironman was the way to claw it back. Why he thought this would work was beyond me, we only had one person in the section that was into that craziness.

Destry rallied the Loadmasters for the 2013 challenge, no excuse was acceptable and he sorted out the individual competitors and then put the rest in a team—if you had a good excuse to get out of it, he put your spouse in. That way he ensured the pressure was on!

December rolled around pretty quickly, and with the support of the squadron we all headed for Taupo for the Ironman. The weekend was epic, there were Air Force people everywhere, competing or supporting, and it was just awe-inspiring being part of it all.

It was really hard to pick a winner, as just doing it made them all winners to me, but since the Load Masters came in 1 and 2 for the individual competition and 1 and 3 for the teams, they were the clear winners.

How had it come to something as demanding as a Half Ironman? Back in 2008 Mike Roberts thought that the Loadmasters should have an official challenge with the Engineers, Paul McBride made us up a trophy and it was on. But what could we all play yet no-one actually be good at?

Lawn bowls. I think it had more to do with the fact that we could have a few beers and a BBQ while playing, and it was easy to organise. The challenge was born and not a year has been missed, which is a bit of a miracle considering how busy we all get in the run up to Christmas.

The Loadmasters had a great run, winning bowls in 2008 and 2009. Then for 2010 we challenged the Engineers to a raft race. I thought we might be dead in the water, assuming their engineering aptitude; however, the Loadmasters stormed home to a convincing victory.

The Engineers were getting desperate for a win, so they challenged us to a fishing competition for 2011. SGT Claffey cleaned up with a massive, beautifully filleted, snapper. Don’t ask Mike Roberts about it unless you have a spare half an hour to hear about the injustice of it all!

Home brew was the challenge for 2012, and there were some breath-taking brews from darks, ciders, wine, wheat beers and more. This challenge took at least six months of preparation – with a few blown up and some drunk by mistake. The Engineers cleaned us up, but we should have known, they can be a bit reluctant to open their wallets so no wonder they were into making home brew!

Now that we have won the Half Ironman and re-claimed the trophy, what will the Engineers dream up for this year? They are thinking it might just be a bit less physical than an Ironman—let’s hope so!
November 10th was the date of the 2013 Red Bull Trolley Grand Prix. Mid-last year, Paul Tracy had flicked me a text message... it was time to start work on our next trolley.

The first mission was the name; Sam Boulton at A109 Maintenance suggested 'Chickenhawk'. Then Toby Mercer at 42 Sqn drew us an astounding cartoon of our vision.

The next problem was to hunt volunteers to fill out our team. Sam Baker was eager; not only did he help with the structure, but his Avionics prowess gave the Chickenhawk its amazing electronics.

We joined the Engineering Club, gathered help and counsel from the various Bays, and sent email requests flying out. We were engaged for many weekends and weeknights slogging away on our creation. In particular, the Metal Shop, Skin Bay, Rotary Bay, Composites Bay and Paint Shop were all immensely helpful, with people who would pop by in their spare time to lend a hand or give advice.

Loïc ‘Frenchy’ Ifrah appeared and got right to work—a breath of fresh air to boost us all. Before we knew it we had reached the week of the race and the Chickenhawk was complete!

Our Chickenhawk, dressed up in RNZAF livery, had a functional master caution panel, navigation lights, anti-collision lights, a powered teetering main rotor assembly, a free-spinning tail rotor, day/night flares that spewed flames from the tips of the skids, a full instrument panel, disc brakes, a cyclic that actually steered the trolley and, our pièce de résistance, a collective that lifted to tilt the whole frame forward on takeoff!

Without much time to admire the finished product we strapped it on a trailer and were off to Auckland. The drive north went smoothly until a huge cloud of steam engulfed the windscreen of Paul’s Hilux—his ute had met its demise. Tomo O’Neill deployed his station wagon from Whenuapai and rescued us.

The Red Bull Trolley Derby was an incredible event—the perfect mixture of genius and ridiculousness, with amazing people. With free-flow Red Bull and ice cream available, everyone was on a sugar high!

The moment our time came, Tomo the Marshaller gave the ‘engine start’ signal. With the sound of a T-53 engine spooling up in the background, Paul flicked the main rotor switch and the blades spun into life—the crowd went ballistic! Sam slipped under the disc for a hot refuel as I dashed in to clean the windows. Meanwhile, Frenchy was stimulating the crowd by flexing his guns and distributing 3 Sqn stickers. Paul, in the cockpit, had his mirror out making sure he was looking good for the ‘flight’.

Sam and Tomo flanked the Chickenhawk as Frenchy and I thrust with our pushers and initiated the flares. Paul pulled the collective right at the very moment the flares went off. The Chickenhawk was in forward flight to a roar from the crowd and the commentators! Paul dominated the jumps, conquered the wall-ride and completed his flawless run with a 180 turn at the finish, with extra panache!

The feedback we received was great; we even featured the next morning on TV One’s Breakfast as Sam the Weatherman’s favourite trolley. Despite not winning a place on the podium, our mission (much like the Iroquois) was not to be the fastest down the hill, but to exude style! In a word, pulchritude!

Thanks to everyone who had any part to play in the creation of the Chickenhawk, it was truly a team effort and we appreciated all your contributions! 😊
Poland to commemorate The Great Escape

The 70th Anniversary of the Great Escape will be commemorated in Zagan, Poland, during March 2014. Żagań Muzeum is leading the commemorations.

The programme includes:

- A contest about the Great Escape for pupils from schools in the Żagań region.
- Cross-country racing and other local contests
- Saturday 22 March – military re-enactors plus fly-past of WWII aircraft.
- Monday 24 March – official day of the Great Escape 70th Anniversary with a ceremony beginning at 1100 hrs. A flypast by the RAF and the Polish Air Force is part of the ceremony. The event concludes with an official banquet.
- 25 March in Szczecin – premiere of Film “Escape for North”, about servicemen who escaped to Szczecin.

It is hoped families and representatives from the UK, Canada, Australia, NZ, South Africa, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and the USA will attend, along with Polish officials.

Health Expectations of New Zealand Veterans Since 1991

The Veteran’s Support Bill was introduced into Parliament, to modernise the War Pension scheme around the principles of disability management, and rehabilitation, rather than compensation.

Research is being carried out to investigate how younger veterans will respond to the proposed changes in the Veterans Support Bill. The Bill enjoys widespread support and is likely to be adopted into Law within the next 12 months.

Younger veterans in NZ have been exposed to a largely different set of experiences than their older counterparts (who experienced WWII, Korea, or Vietnam). Thus younger veterans may identify with the term ‘veteran’ differently to their predecessors, and that their health may be affected to a different degree by their service.

We hope that this project will provide useful insights as to how veterans will respond to these changes. Participants will be eligible to participate if they have had any military deployments since, and including, the Balkans conflict in 1991.

We would like to warmly invite potential participants to take part in a short, 20 minute interview, either by phone, or in person. If you are interested in participating, please email Researcher Mike Peebles at: peemi248@student.otago.ac.nz or call 027 283 4345.

[This project has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, University of Otago].

The Short Stirling

The first four-engined heavy bomber to join the RAF, the Stirling was designed to a 1936 specification and made its first flight in 1939.

The Stirling’s designers were experienced in building flying boats and, in essence, designed a new fuselage with a wheeled undercarriage for the Short Sunderland’s wings and tail. However to improve take off performance the bomber’s main undercarriage had to be lengthened, this meant the legs were lanky and complicated; throughout its life the Stirling was prone to undercarriage-related landing accidents.

The Air Ministry required that the wingspan should not exceed 100 feet (to enable the new bomber to fit inside the then standard RAF hangars). In fact, Shorts wanted to extend the span; the 99 ft wingspan meant the bomber could not fly much above 15,000 ft and, laden, could barely climb over the Alps during missions to Italy. With its limited service ceiling, the Stirling remained an easier target for German flak throughout its operational career.

Shorts’ factories were bombed during the Battle of Britain, delaying the type’s entry into service; the Stirling flew its first operation during February 1941.

No 75 (NZ) Sqn converted to Stirlings (from Wellingtons) in October 1942 and subsequently flew the bomber for the bombing of Hamburg, the raid against the German V-weapons station at Peenemunde, and the Battle of the Ruhr.

The best-performing version of the bomber was the Mark III which entered service in early 1943, but the Stirling still suffered higher losses than the other heavy bombers. The Stirlings were gradually phased out from the Command’s Main Force and assigned (less dangerous) duties such as minelaying.

A flaw of the Stirling was that its bomb-bay was divided down its length so the largest bomb that could be carried was the 2,000lb armour-piercing bomb; the new 4,000lb High Capacity bomb (the block-buster) was too big for the Stirling’s narrow bays. On long-range missions, such as to Italy or deep inside Germany, the Stirling was restricted to seven 500lb bombs.

In March/April 1944, No. 75 finally began to convert to the Lancasters—there was some bitterness in the largely Kiwi squadron that they had been stuck with the Stirling for so long. No. 75 Sqn lost 86 Stirlings on operations, with 479 aircrew killed and 76 made prisoners of war.

The final Bomber Command mission by Stirlings was an attack on Le Havre, France, on 8 September 1944. From mid-1944 the Stirlings were widely employed as paratroop-carriers or glider-tugs, being used in these roles during the Normandy landings.

The Mk IV and V versions, built specifically for these roles, remained in production until 1945. All told 2,383 Stirlings were built; the type continued in RAF service only until 1946.
**Short Stirling III: Tech Specs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Max bomb load</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armament</td>
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Photo: Air Force Museum of New Zealand