2017 AIR TATTOO – A STUNNING CELEBRATION

TACKLING DEVASTATING BLAZES – RNZAF’S CONTRIBUTION

NEW CO TAKES HELM AT NO. 3 SQUADRON
WGCDR Mike Cannon takes on CO role at No. 3 Sqn
First Word

By Chaplain Cl2 (WGCDR) Di Woods

“We will soar with wings like eagles”  
(from Isaiah 41, the Bible)

What better way to start our 80th anniversary celebrations than with our fantastic tattoo? A huge shout out to all those who beavered behind the scenes over so many months to make it such a success: tau ke! In those few moments when we weren’t looking up into the skies, I particularly appreciated seeing the faces of ex RNZAF personnel who love to come and support such events and enjoy seeing the passion in the faces of our newest and most junior recruits. As they draw pleasure from seeing glimpses of the future, it reminded me of just what we are celebrating – 80 years of amazing people who have brought the RNZAF to life in the past; and who are living it in the present.

True or false: 30 years ago you could have attended an Air Show in Cambridge, and seen a Skyhawk that was painted gold? If you were around then you’ll know it’s true – and for the rest of us, Google “RNZAF 50th anniversary”, look at the images, and see for yourself! I bet traffic management was easier back then, but whose cost centre picked up the tab for the gold paint?

It wasn’t too many years after that 50th anniversary that I first drove through the gates of RNZAF Base Wigram – the home of Flying Training Wing and of course No 2 Officers Mess (which was an ideal place to celebrate your 21st birthday I might add!). When I initially had a crack at a Wings course, I never thought I’d end up as a Supply Officer, let alone a Chaplain. The ‘revolving door’ has allowed me to take skills and experience and training from the Air Force out to civvy street, and then to do the same in reverse.

This time around I find myself located in Wellington as the Senior Air Chaplain, and along with the privilege of encouraging and equipping chaplains across the services around our bases and camps, it means I’m involved with the next stage of our 80th celebrations, as are many of you.

The next phase focuses on our actual ‘birthday’ on April 1st. RNZAF Woodbourne currently hold the Queen’s colour and will take part in a charter parade, while all of our bases will beat the retreat, and have a few refreshments afterwards... Here in the capital we will gather for a commemorative service at Old St Paul’s at 1700h on 30 March to acknowledge our gratitude for all that has been accomplished in these 80 years, to remember the costs that have been borne, and to pray for the future.

You are a part of that future. Which of you reading this will be CAF for our centenary in 20 years time? Dare to believe!

While significant anniversary years understandably involve some gazing in the rear view mirror, may that reflection also inspire us to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Per ardua ad astra: through struggle to the stars – we will continue to soar like eagles. 🦅
A Celebration of 80 Years
The skies above Base Ohakea in Manawatu were decorated with a mosaic of fighter jets, aerobatic displays, cargo and passenger aircraft formations, and helicopter demonstrations during this year’s Air Tattoo military air show. More than 31,000 visitors attended the show to see the air and static displays as well as visiting the many trade tents set up around the perimeter. The sun shone over the two-day event and thousands of cameras recorded nearly every moment. It was a fitting celebration to recognise the Royal New Zealand Air Force’s 80 years of serving the country.

Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal (AVM) Tony Davies said it was appropriate to celebrate the occasion not only with our own people and New Zealanders, but also with our friends who have stood by us for the past eight decades.

“When we operate these days in a military context we’re not out there alone, we’re always operating alongside other nations as part of a package. So it’s great to invite them out here and keep those bonds going and to help celebrate our 80th anniversary.”

One of his favourite displays was the Kiwi Thunder formation, made up of two C-130 Hercules, a P-3K2 Orion and a Boeing 757. AVM Davies cut his teeth flying the C-130 Hercules and said the formation flying with those aircraft was harder than it looked.

“Our aircrew train incredibly hard, so there’s the training, the skill, the crowd lines and the dimensions of the display area that you have to stay within, but some of it is the perceived pressure that you get on the day. I’ve done air displays myself and there’s nothing more exhilarating than those moments just before you power up and take off and perform in front of a large crowd like this – very few things come close to that, apart from conducting a military air operation.”

The planning for the event was immense with four different Air Force teams working on the logistics. A large amount of planning went towards the traffic management system, which paid off on the weekend. Private parking near the base was offered, as well as park and ride options. Roads around the base were closed and cars were not allowed to stop on the State Highway running past it. There were also no ticket sales at the gate. All those measures resulted in traffic flowing easily and no hold-ups for those coming to the show.

“It’s been a mammoth effort and this is where it all pays off on a day like this – it just couldn’t be better,” AVM Davies said.
“It’s a chance to say thank you to the public for their support and to show them a little bit about how modern our Air Force is, how well our people are trained and to help us celebrate our birthday.”

– AVM Tony Davies
A rare sight in New Zealand skies is the sight and sound of air combat aircraft. At the Air Tattoo, three tore through the skies, amazing the crowds. The Royal Australia Air Force sent two of its F/A-18 Classic Hornets and the United States Air Force (USAF) contributed an F-16 Fighting Falcon.

F/A-18 Pilot Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Matthew Trayling was part of a 15 minute aerobatic display. “We’re going to showcase everything from high-speed, high-G-manoeuvring flying, all the way down to slow-speed, high angle-of-attack – really throwing the jet around and taking it through its paces,” he said.

That type of flying puts major physical challenges on the pilot. A 7.5G manoeuvre feels like “seven and a half times your body weight squishing into the ejection seat”, FLTLT Trayling said.

“I get down off the flight and I feel like I’ve just done a four-hour gym session – working my legs and body.”

While the crowd needed ear protection from the sound of the engine, FLTLT Trayling said inside the cockpit was quiet.

USAF’s Major (MAJ) Richard Smeeding flew the F-16 Fighting Falcon at the show. He described the aerobatic display as like “being inside a washing machine”.

“I go from -3G to 9.6Gs so the big thing with that is staying conscious, it’s not easy, you need special training to stay awake, so I flex my lower body and breath every two seconds keeping good body pressure, otherwise I go to sleep.”

He also flies the aircraft up 50,000 feet and spirals back down. To come out of that, MAJ Smeeding needs to perform an 8.5G pull.

“So I give it a second to get my mind straight then I see the ground rushing at me so I pull back.”

Meanwhile, one of the giants to join the static display at Ohakea was the Royal Air Force’s A400M Atlas. One of its pilots, FLTLT Rebeca Lee said it was an “incredible opportunity to be able to fly it to the other side of the world”.

The A400 was amazing to fly, she said.

“It’s really modern, there are many protection systems that are all computerised so it gives you the capacity to do other things as well as flying the aircraft.

“We flew over the Marlborough Sounds, which was just beautiful. We flew over Cloudy Bay and it was great to have the opportunity to do that and I don’t think we’ll ever have an opportunity to do that again. It was stunning, beautiful.”
Amongst the thousands who attended the Air Tattoo were some very talented photographers who snapped some amazing moments over the weekend. Here is a handful of the many fantastic photographs capturing the action in the skies and the fun on the ground.

1. Bronwyn Bateman
2. Adrian Watkins
3. Bronwyn Bateman
4. Adrian Watkins
5. Alan Paterson
6. Erin Vennell
7. Brian Williams
8. Erana Makere Kaa
9. @meowsqueak
10. Sam Hall
11. Alexander Upperton
12. David Peacock
13. Nicole Halliday
14. Carl Nalta
15. Amy Toms
16. David Brownlie
17. Liz McLeay
18. Peter Whitwell
19. Diane Sieger
20. Brendan Daran
This cracking photo took top prize in our Air Tattoo visitor photo competition. Congratulations!
‘80 Years in 80 Stories’: the story behind the stories

By Michelle Sim, Communications Manager, Air Force Museum

The Air Force Museum’s ‘80 Years in 80 Stories’ project, officially launched at the Air Tattoo last month and viewed by thousands of people over that weekend, was the result of months of planning, research, design and production.

When first discussing our contribution to the RNZAF’s 80th anniversary celebrations, we decided that we needed to bring the human story to the fore. What better way to achieve that than by creating a literal crowd of life-sized figures? The challenge was to select a group of 80 individuals who would each provide a personal insight into the many different elements of the RNZAF’s history. Taken as a whole, this crowd of figures would be representative of all the men and women who have served with the RNZAF throughout its 80 years.

The process of selection was relatively straightforward for the earlier years, as we were able to draw on the Museum’s extensive research collection to identify suitable candidates. As we approached the more recent past, however, it became increasingly complicated as our historic sources dried up, and we had to rely on our own staff networks and past editions of Air Force News to identify significant events and people involved with them. This gave us some leads, which we could then follow up with phone calls to squadrons and individuals. We aimed to make the selection as diverse as possible, however, the historical record tended to be rather ‘pilot-heavy’, particularly in the earlier years. We were able to introduce more diversity in the more contemporary selection – a good lesson in the importance of ‘contemporary collecting’!

We deliberately presented the figures in no particular order – we wanted people to encounter aircraftmen alongside air vice-marshals, pilots standing shoulder-to-shoulder with ground crew, and even a squadron mascot or two. This is in recognition of the fact that all have contributed to making the RNZAF the richly diverse service it is today.

This project has been hugely rewarding for everyone involved. From interviewing personnel about their experiences (thank you all!), to watching the encounters between the real people and their ‘2D’ counterparts – particularly where they have involved other family members and the telling of even more stories.

So, where does the story go from here? The exhibition will be returning to the Museum for public display, but we anticipate that it may be used to support further RNZAF events at other locations in the near future. We also hope to continue adding new stories as they come to hand. Follow us on social media under the hashtag #80Years80Stories for updates on where it heads next. ♦
Panorama of the Museum display

Air Commodore (Rtd) Stu McIntyre with his 2D cutout figure.

SONLDR Joss Smillie and her daughter Renee checking out the ‘80 Years in 80 Stories’ exhibition

Aircraftman Phoebe Van Der Plas poses with her 2D cutout at the Air Tattoo.

CAF, AVM Tony Davies poses with his ‘younger self’.
Scorching weather combined with tinder dry land created a devastatingly combustible recipe, resulting in massive scrub fires that destroyed homes and tragically took the life of a former SAS member recently. The blazes took hold in land in Hawke’s Bay and Canterbury, prompting a state of emergency to be declared in both regions. Firefighters and personnel from the RNZAF and Army were deployed to help battle the flames and a C-130 Hercules delivered 15 tonnes of fire retardant.

NZDF Support in Scrub Fire Battles
The NZDF mobilised about 80 personnel, including about 20 firefighters, to help battle bush fires in Canterbury and Hawke’s Bay. The NZDF firefighting team went straight to work after arriving at night on 19 January.

Hawke’s Bay was the first to deal with fires that raged along the hills by Waimarama Road. Eleven firefighters worked alongside rural firefighters for four days getting the blaze under control.

In that same week, the Port Hills above Christchurch erupted in flames.

It was during this emergency that helicopter pilot and former SAS soldier CPL David ‘Steve’ Askin was killed when his helicopter crashed while he was helping in the effort to fight the fire.

As the flames neared residential homes, about 35 personnel from Burnham Military Camp were tasked to help police check on residents in affected areas and evacuate those from Westmorland and Dyers Pass Road.

Media reported 450 residents were evacuated from their homes, 11 houses were destroyed and many more could suffer heat and smoke damage.

As part of the NZDF operation, a C-130 Hercules from No. 40 Squadron delivered to Christchurch five pallets of firefighting foam and other fire-retardant materials that it had picked up from Australia.

Joint Forces New Zealand acting Commander, Air Commodore Kevin McEvoy, said five detachable NZDF fire pods were also used to fight the fires in Christchurch. The pods can be transported on a variety of vehicles and use an ultra-high-pressure hose with a pointed nozzle that can pierce the ground and douse burning roots.

“Our Defence Force is committed to supporting the local community in any way we can. We remain ready to provide additional assistance if required,” Air Commodore McEvoy said.

The United States Coast Guard heavy icebreaker USCGC Polar Star, which was visiting Lyttelton, was also willing to help the Government’s emergency response, he said.

Meanwhile the NZDF set up a field kitchen to support firefighters, police and other workers involved in the emergency response to the Port Hills fire.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob Loftus, who oversaw the NZDF’s relief operations in Canterbury, said nine Army chefs prepared three meals a day for at least 250 emergency workers from a field kitchen set up near Halswell Quarry.

Shifts of 15 experienced Defence Force firefighters worked with the National Rural Fire Authority since the scrub fire broke out on the hills above Christchurch. Shifts of 25 NZDF personnel also worked alongside police to provide 24/7 support for the community, check on residents in affected areas and evacuate those whose homes were closest to the fire line, and enforce cordons and roadblocks.
Base Ohakea’s No. 3 Squadron has a new Commanding Officer and he is unlike any other the rotary unit has seen before. Wing Commander (WGC) Mike Cannon is understood to be the first in the squadron’s history to not have his pilot’s wings – but by no stretch does that mean he lacks the experience.

“It doesn’t really get much better. I really believe I’m living the dream,” WGC Cannon said as he sat in his office at Ohakea, looking out across the flight line to a calm, sunny day.

He took over the role from WGC Scott McKenzie at a Change of Command Ceremony last month.

Achieving the Commanding Officer position was the pinnacle for any “helicopter guy” to reach, he said.

“To be a non-pilot in the job, it shows a lot of faith by the organisation and particularly the Chief of Air Force, to give me that opportunity, so I feel really, really lucky to do this job.”

WGC Cannon has served in every rank he has been in while posted to No. 3 Sqn, as both maintainer and aircrew. He has seen many changes across the years but says the constant has always been the quality of the people. “The thing I’ve noticed in the short time that I’ve been back is that there are a great bunch of people here all trying to do their best to deliver on expectations. It’s humbling.”

WGC Cannon had always been drawn to helicopters. When he was a child in the United Kingdom, he would watch the RAF helicopters on search and rescue flights.

A point of difference with the helicopter squadron to the others was that the aircraft were able to land in a variety of different places and often the crew were able to interact with the public.

“That’s what No. 3 Squadron’s about. We generally see more of the New Zealand public and they understand it’s their Air Force,” he said.
A C-130 Hercules has flown more than a tonne of old library books to disadvantaged children in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The strategic airlift aircraft, on a scheduled flight to the Pacific, was tasked to deliver the books to Port Moresby.

“This is the second year we’ve delivered books to PNG, and we are delighted to help get thousands of books into the hands of kids who need them. We all know that books and learning go hand in hand, and this is a tremendous opportunity to support our regional neighbours develop all-important literacy rates for the next generation,” Air Commodore Darryn Webb, the Air Component Commander, said.

The books were collected from New Zealand libraries by Lorraine Goldsmith, the wife of PNG’s Honorary Consul-General in Auckland, Dr Peter Goldsmith.

“The books have given the children in PNG much joy. Most have been given to libraries in Bougainville that have very few books. Since the libraries have received the books, there has been an 80 per cent increase in children wishing to read these books, which is quite outstanding,” Dr Goldsmith said.
On International Women’s Day, the Royal New Zealand Air Force recognises with pride all women in our regular and reserve forces, and civilian staff. Every day they passionately uphold the best traditions of the New Zealand Defence Force and enrich our inclusive and diverse workforce.
As my deployment in Antarctica has come to an end, I’ve been able to reflect on my time and the adventure I was able to experience. The cargo handler role at Scott Base is different every day and there have been many challenges that I’ve had to overcome, from the weather to last minute cargo load changes.

When I arrived in Antarctica and stepped off the C-17 it was to a beautiful day at Pegasus Airfield. All NZDF personnel piled into the back of a Toyota Troopie and headed to Scott Base. The next day I hit the ground running learning my role and the computer system that was involved with it. I was given a handover and headed over the hill to meet my McMurdo counterparts – all 80 of them.

There are multiple tasks that fall under the Scott Base cargo handler, which made my job very versatile. I could be collecting and processing over 100 tonnes of cargo from McMurdo for science events, picking up packages for the base and personnel flown in on the C-17 or C-130, loading the Basler or Twin Otters at Willies Field, driving scientists and their samples to the aircraft at Pegasus, collecting baggage for incoming
personnel to Scott Base, certifying items that were flying within the continent, helping with the helicopter operations, organising the spreadsheet for all the items that went back in the containers on ships, giving departure briefs, or organising the cargo to fly north, which was over 14 tonnes this season.

There was never a dull day in my role and when work was finished for the day it didn’t stop, as I was only here for four and a half months and I wanted to make the most of what opportunities I was given.

The recreation that is offered is amazing. McMurdo hosts numerous sporting events each week and I managed to join some indoor football and volleyball teams. There are competitions between the two bases and it was a great feeling when we won the tug-of-war. I won’t mention who won the 5km Manhauling competition.

The Field trainers/Field Support guys that are here offer trips for us to get off base and see the area. I was lucky enough to go to Cape Evans and Cape Royds to see Shackleton’s and Scott’s huts, as well as Discovery Hut up at Hut Point.

I went on a Hagglund ride to see the US Navy plane that crashed at Pegasus, got up Castle Rock, walked the Pressure Ridges to see the seals and learnt to ski at Castle Rock Ski Field. A flight with Southern Lakes Helicopters into the Dry Valleys was unforgettable - it was such a surreal place and to see an area that was free of snow and had flowing water in Antarctica was amazing.

Being deployed overseas for Christmas and New Year’s was different – there was only base staff around, so it was very quiet. We celebrated Christmas with a big base dinner and a secret Santa of handmade gifts.

As we were in the military we were invited to participate in Remembrance Day at McMurdo with fellow US military personnel. I volunteered for the flag bearer role alongside a US counterpart. This was definitely interesting trying to align our drill, which I managed to convert to a New Zealand drill that made it easy for me. It was good to be a part of the service they held and to see how much their country appreciated their military folk.

I will never forget all these experiences that I was able to have while working in Antarctica, and I am grateful to be part of such a small percentage that are able to come down and support the science that is being achieved.
The MARS-L, or Modular Assault Rifle System – Light, manufactured by Lewis Machine and Tools, will be rolled out across all three Services of the New Zealand Defence Force over the next 18 months. The first two shipments have arrived and the weapons are in the armoury.

The first shipment of MARS-L rifles and ancillaries arrived in New Zealand last year, and is the first of four tranches to be rolled out to New Zealand Defence Force personnel over the next 18 months.

Two container loads of the MARS-L assault rifles and ancillaries have been shipped to New Zealand so far, and these weapons have been inspected, entered into the system and stored in the armoury.

Late last year soldiers in Linton, Waiouru and Burnham Military Camps were given a first-hand look at the new weapons as part of a series of roadshows around NZDF’s camps and bases.

The weapons will be toured around to Navy and Air Force personnel early this year.

In total, NZDF will have 5568 weapons across the three Services plus 3472 in a pool for spares and repairs and deployments.
Major John Lawrey, the Programme Manager for the In-Service Weapons Replacement and Upgrade Programme, says the feedback from personnel during the roadshows has been very positive.

“Everyone who has had the opportunity to handle the weapon so far has really liked what they’ve seen, and they’re really looking forward to being assigned a weapon of this quality,” MAJ Lawrey says.

The MARS-L was selected as the NZDF’s new individual weapon after the Ministry of Defence led a tender process on behalf of NZDF to determine a weapons system to replace the Steyr rifles, which had been in service since 1987 and had reached their end of life of type.

Eight of the world’s leading arms manufacturers were selected to submit rifles. From there, NZDF carried out an evaluation trial before a final recommendation was put forward.

At the end of 2015, the Government announced the $59 million purchase of the new weapons system and associated equipment. At the heart of the system is the new rifle but the whole package also includes advanced day optics, a detachable grenade launcher that can be used independently of the rifle if required, and other ancillaries such as combat torches and sound suppressors.

Features:

- 5.56mm assault rifle with an open architecture configuration that is able to effectively engage targets out to 600 metres.
- The standard NATO 5.56mm calibre maintains inter-operability with ABCA/NATO military allies.
- Ergonomic design makes it suited to all shapes and sizes of personnel and it can be adjusted to fit when wearing body armour.
- Ambidextrous controls.
- Reliable.

The weapon system package:

At the heart of the system is the new rifle but the whole package also includes advanced day and night optics, a detachable grenade launcher that can be used independently of the rifle if required, and other ancillaries such as combat torches and sound suppressors.

It includes initial spare parts, storage/shipping solutions, armoury upgrades, blue weapons (plastic replicas of the real thing), training and maintaining manuals, introduction into service training, and marking and simulation systems.
Corporal (CPL) Joseph Seymour, a Helicopter Loadmaster from the Australian Army, was eager to see a lot of action when he took up a five-month secondment with the Royal New Zealand Air Force’s No. 3 Squadron late last year. Four months on and his deployment has been more action-packed than he ever expected.

“The most interesting job I have done so far would be the support we provided to Kaikoura following the November earthquake. This included transporting aid supplies, power poles and an excavator as well as rescuing hundreds of stranded tourists and residents,” he said.

CPL Seymour was also one of the crew in the successful search-and-rescue mission for a 60-year-old hunter who was reported missing in the Kaimanawa Ranges in December.

He helped to winch the hunter on board an NH90 helicopter after spotting him standing on a riverbed shortly before 11am on 5 December, waving his survival blanket.

“We had just dropped off the last of the Police’s search teams and were flying out of the valley when our Australian Helicopter Loadmaster spotted him,” NH90 captain Flight Lieutenant Peter Familton said.

CPL Seymour said this was the first time he had been to New Zealand and he values the experience he has gained so far.

“I’ve enjoyed the exposure to the amount of winching at height, which we don’t do a lot of in Australia,” he said.

“There hasn’t been too much adjustment required. I’ve enjoyed working with the New Zealanders quite a lot, apart from a few misunderstandings in word pronunciation – we use slightly different terms in the Australian Army.

“This secondment is a great experience for us. We are here to help boost Helicopter Loadmasters for the RNZAF. We are hoping that the loadmaster numbers increase here in the near future and we are able to turn it into an exchange.”

There are 11 Australian Defence Force (ADF) officers and enlisted personnel seconded to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF).

As longstanding defence and security partners, Australia and New Zealand work closely together. Examples of this collaboration between the two defence organisations include combined operations, joint delivery of building partner capacity training in the Middle East, joint training, secondments and exchanges.
From Pilot to Psychologist

By Charlene Smart, Senior Communications Advisor (South), Defence Public Affairs

Base Woodbourne’s new psychologist started life in the RNZAF with a more high-flying career path lined up. Now, the pilot-turned-psychologist is using his unique set of skills to help prepare the next generation for a career in the service.

After graduating from the Air Force in 2000 as a pilot, Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Carsten Grimm flew Iroquois helicopters with No. 3 Squadron and qualified as a Flight Instructor. After 10 years the pilot left the RNZAF for a new adventure – travelling around South America by motorbike.

“I rode 25,000km in 12 months, in a bunch of different countries, had a bunch of near misses on dodgy roads and loaded the bike in and out of dugout canoes in the Amazon,” he said.

When he came home, FLTLT Grimm completed his Masters degree in Psychology at the University of Canterbury. He worked for the Mental Health Foundation promoting mental health and resilience in Christchurch following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes before re-joining the RNZAF in July 2015.

Now, working as the base psychologist at Woodbourne, FLTLT Grimm said the role was “a real privilege”.

“The base is a busy training environment with a high churn of courses. This lets you get in front of a bunch of people who are the next generation of the Air Force and the New Zealand Defence Force. That is really cool, it allows you to help shape the thinking we might need for the future.

“Sports psychology, coaching and mental resilience skills have come a long way in recent years and I’m passionate about introducing these concepts to the next generation,” he said.

Even when he was a pilot FLTLT Grimm was toying with the idea of retraining as a psychologist, as he is passionate about it.

“I am also proud to share and relate my experiences to people when they find themselves going through a tricky patch. The whole job is a privilege,” he said.

He had a “strong motivation” to work with the new recruits.

“We need war fighters across every rank level with the psychological skills to be able to deal with – and thrive – in the face of changing circumstances, incomplete information, short-notice tasking, high stress, emotional demands, you name it. I know we ask a lot from our people, that is why we also need to train and teach our folks to have the resilience skills they can draw on to make sure they win when it counts.”

His experiences, both in and out of uniform, had made him more aware of the ups and downs of life, especially working in Christchurch after the earthquakes.

“My previous career has made me appreciate the demands that our people are under every day. I have definitely cultivated a keen compassion for what it is like to have to go away on exercise all the time, re-deploy with short respite times and juggling a family. I am keen to help support people to their best through all of it,” he said.

"TE RAPA AIR FORCE BASE 1992-2017 REUNION"
The Mallon Crew

It took a flight in a Lancaster to spark Vic Jay’s curiosity about his father’s role during World War II as a flight engineer in the iconic aircraft. His curiosity led to a four-year journey, resulting in a book about the crew his father worked with and the tragedies they endured.

Bob Jay died aged 55 in 1974, leaving his son with many unanswered questions about his time in the war. “All I had was his log book and the name of his New Zealand pilot, Bill Mallon, who had suddenly and rather mysteriously left the crew at the end of April 1945,” Vic said.

The crew had been posted to No. 75(NZ) Squadron at RAF Mepal, in Cambridgeshire. With the help of a couple of blog writers in the UK, Simon Sommerville and Pete Tresadern, Vic was able to discover the details of his father’s training and the operations in which he took part.

“Crucially, I also discovered the names of the rest of his crew, four from New Zealand and two from England.”

Vic was eventually able to make contact with the families of all but one of the crew and, as more and more information came to light, uncovered tragedies that befell the crew as well as some heartwarming moments.

His book chronicles the sad war-time tale of Bill Mallon and his two brothers Jack and Tom. The family grew up in Taranaki and all three sons joined the war as pilots. Only Bill made it home. Jack was shot down over the French town of Fréthun, near Calais in 1940 and Tom was killed in March 1945 when he experienced problems with his aircraft and crashed near his airfield in the Netherlands.

The wheels were put in motion for Bill to be granted a compassionate posting back to New Zealand, but it was not granted until after Bill had flown his last war operation in April 1945.
The crew’s bomb aimer, Flying Officer Ken Philp, also suffered a family tragedy. His youngest brother, Flying Officer Gibson Philp, who was a pilot with No. 486 (NZ) Squadron, was killed when his Typhoon Mk IB SA-R (JR329) was hit by flak while flying at low altitude attempting to destroy German bomb sites. The plane crashed less than 70km from the site of Jack Mallon’s crash. He was just 23-years-old and left a young wife, Nancy, back in New Zealand.

However, as with all human stories, there were amazing moments captured in the book as well, including the story of the Scotsman, later a resident of Canada and New Zealand, who literally fell out of his aircraft at 18,000 feet.

It was important to emphasise that the book was not about war, Vic said.

“Rather it is about the impact of war on a small group of men and their families.”

The tales came from primary sources, which made the book possible, including a remarkable collection of poems, drawings, photographs, and even the transcript of an interview given by Bill Mallon in 2004. There were also letters from the navigator to his wife and small children 11,000 miles away, which provide a fascinating insight into the hopes and fears of a young man facing the biggest challenge of his life.

‘The Mallon Crew’ is available on Amazon and Kindle. It can also be found at Auckland’s Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT), the Air Force Museum of New Zealand, Wigram, the Aviation Heritage Centre, Omaka, and Hedley’s Booksellers in Masterton.
A Swedish Admiral in Beijing receives a decision brief for the UN Mission in the fictional country of Carana from Australian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Ethiopian, Ghanaian and Tanzanian officers, marking the culmination of the United Nations Staff Officers’ Course (UNSOC). This event provides a snapshot of the diversity and co-operation that epitomised the UNSOC, which took place at the Ministry of National Defense Peacekeeping Centre, Yanqi, China. I had the privilege to act as the NZDF instructor on the course and working with a professional, motivated and enthusiastic group of people from 21 countries was a memorable experience.

The purpose of UNSOC was to prepare students, from five continents, for deployment as UN Staff Officers on Peacekeeping Missions, and to enhance co-operation and understanding amongst representatives of participating defence forces. In all aspects, UNSOC Beijing can be considered an outstanding success.

The assistance, resources and hospitality provided by the Commander, officers and staff of the Ministry of National Defense Peacekeeping Centre were consistently of the highest order and helped to make UNSOC a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Particular credit is due to the People’s Liberation Army Admin Officer, Captain Zhang Yao, and the UNSOC Chief Instructor, Major Bengt-Ake Folkeson, of the Swedish International Centre.

The course covered topics including the UN code of conduct, the protection of civilians, the UN military component planning process, the UN information cycle and civil military co-operation. The lessons were greatly enhanced by the sharing of experiences and insights between instructors and students. The overriding importance of effective communication when working within dynamic multinational headquarters environments, which students may encounter on UN peacekeeping missions, was impressed upon us.

The UN “Carana” exercise scenario provided a challenging opportunity for students to apply knowledge gained from theory lessons to UN Staff Officer roles in a simulated peacekeeping mission. Students planned UN peacekeeping operational activity to facilitate humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, the maintenance of security and post conflict resolution in compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions, international law and contributing nations’ political caveats.

Weekend cultural experience activities provided a refreshing break from intensive learning, and an excellent opportunity to experience some of Beijing’s cultural treasures including the Temple of Heaven, Forbidden City and The Great Wall.

For me, the UNSOC experience was enhanced by awareness gained from the Massey University Graduate Diploma of Arts (Chinese) programme, which was funded by Voluntary Education Study Assistance. This programme provided an excellent foundation on Chinese culture, history and modern standard Mandarin written and oral language for any NZDF person seeking to know more about China and Chinese language. Anybody with an interest in Chinese language and culture is wholeheartedly encouraged to investigate this worthwhile course of study.
When personnel from Base Ohakea saw that work on the Bulls School Bike Track Project had struck long delays, they rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in to make the track happen.

Using Air Force personnel to move the project forward was the brainchild of Chaplain (SQNLDR) Roger Black. The initiative involved 20 personnel from the base’s Medical and Fire sections kindly offer their time and labour to help get the bike track ready for final concrete laying.

The Bulls School Bike Track Project had been ongoing for more than 10 months, with delays because of poor weather over winter and a lack of manpower at the right times.

Recent research had shown there were fewer young people using bikes, which was also linked to an increase in child obesity. The purpose of the concrete track was to encourage the kids (over all seasons) to get out and enjoy riding scooters or bikes in a safe environment.

It was through the generous initiative of RNZAF Base Ohakea staff providing valuable manpower that boosted the project to bring it back on track and it has now been completed, ready for keen cyclists.

With fine weather and good spirits, the RNZAF Medical and Fire personnel seemed to enjoy the hard manual labour being asked of them and the children enjoyed the interaction/distraction within the playground.

The Bulls School Principal, Board of Trustees and the military parents with children at Bulls School, and of course the children, offered a big thank you to RNZAF Base Ohakea, especially Chaplain (SQNLDR) Roger Black, CPL ‘Irish’ McGovern and the team of positive hardworking personnel from Ohakea Medical and Fire Section.
New Year, New Opportunities

The start of a new year can mean different things for our people. After Christmas, we often return to work with greater energy, renewed enthusiasm and a desire to make the most out of the New Year.

Census16 provided us an opportunity to reflect on how we are performing as an Air Force so we can take action to improve how we operate for our people. Our results told us where we are getting things right and where we need to focus more attention.

Getting things right

Health and Safety
We agreed that the NZDF and Air Force place a priority on safety in the workplace. Safety in any service is paramount and so it’s great to see that our people have confidence in this area.

Leadership
Confidence in NZDF senior leadership and service leadership improved and many people said they know how their work contributes towards their unit, Service and the NZDF. This is important because people need to see what impact their work has on our mission success. Many of you also said that your leaders display the NZDF values, which is good to see.

Direction and Purpose
There was an improvement in people’s beliefs around the NZDF having a clear vision of where it’s going and how it’s going to get there. In addition, many of our people showed an improved belief that there is a sense of common purpose in the NZDF. In turn, most of our people said they are proud to work here.

What is the one thing more than anything else that makes the NZDF a great place to work?

There were thousands of comments; here are some of them:

“The sense of common purpose that we all work for the betterment of our country.”

“The interest in an individual’s health and wellbeing both in and outside of the workplace.”

“Strong leadership, clear direction and abundant opportunities for a varied and fulfilling career.”

“Proud to serve my country and wear the uniform.”

It is great to see the areas we are doing well in. It’s also important to build on these whenever we can at all levels of the organisation on a daily basis.
“It’s great to see we’ve made positive progress in certain areas, but it’s the ‘improvement needed’ areas that have our attention. The Census later in the year will give us a better idea as to whether we’re lifting our game fast enough.”

Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshall Tony Davies

Areas to develop

Performance
This was an area you told us we need to improve. Many of our people still feel that poor performance is not dealt with effectively. Conversely, many people also believe outstanding performance is not rewarded and that there’s not enough recognition when people do good work.

Feedback
Many of our people do not feel they get enough regular feedback on their performance or understand how their performance is measured.

Communication
While there has been an improvement on last year, many of our people still feel we need to improve communication within the NZDF to make it more open and honest.

These points will be an area we continue to focus on this year. We also want to hear where things are being done by leaders, teams and units to address any of these areas or others to positive effect. It’s important to recognise these achievements. And remember, this is also an area you said we need to improve on.

More will be coming on this in updates on the Census. Watch this space.

What is the one thing more than anything else that needs to change to make the NZDF a great place to work?

There were thousands of comments; here are some of them:

“Making people accountable for poor performance and actually doing something about it.”

“Better recognition of hard work.”

“Valuing our people, providing timely performance feedback and acknowledging good work when it happens.”

“Communication both up and down through the command chain. Open and transparent lines of communication.”
At camps and bases across the country the national Performance and Evaluation (P & E) Team helps sailors, soldiers, airmen and civilians further their skills and knowledge through evaluating their learning experiences in the NZDF.

P & E is part of the New Zealand Defence College (NZDC) HQ Learning Directions Team and provides performance and evaluation support to inform evidence-based improvement of NZDF training and education.

The 13-person team’s headquarters is based at Hokowhitu, with evaluators located at all main camps and bases.

“Our team works in partnership with learning providers to ensure the provision of training and education is fit for purpose, demonstrates value, and contributes to meeting current and future individual, collective and operational output requirements,” P & E national manager Jenny Lupton said.

The learning performance across the NZDF is focused on:

• ensuring the right training is delivered to the right person at the right time, and
• gauging that NZDF training meets identified organisational capability and strategic requirements.

As well as offering a range of products, managing individual training, and course surveys, the team’s outputs contribute to common and joint individual training and education delivery in order to support NZDF’s Enhanced Combat Capability 2020, and providing performance and evaluation support to ensure a professional, equipped, and capable Defence Force.

Some of the benefits of undertaking evaluation and using the results include an improved ability for:

• informed planning and decision making across all organisation levels
• evidence-based continuous improvement
• increasing the value of learning
• training design and development, and
• training delivery

All are key to helping the NZDF understand how training is being received and used.

“We work with many diverse stakeholders across the NZDF, therefore it’s vital we understand their individual needs and work with them to achieve the best solutions to ensure learning and training is fit for purpose,” said Mrs Lupton.

“The data we gather from your team on specific courses gives us the ability to lead from afar and identify potential issues, and also when something is working well that could benefit our other schools. We use the information to highlight where deeper analysis or investigation is required to either improve our effectiveness or to rectify potential problems before they become a reality.”

(Feedback from the Defence Training Institute)

To contact the P & E representative for your location visit the NZDC Intranet homepage and select Headquarters Group, then Performance and Evaluation.

Got further questions?
We are here to help so please email us: NZDCPerformance&Evalu@nzdf.mil.nz
It’s a funny old game cricket...

By Flight Lieutenant Kathryn Brown

They say it’s the gentlemen’s game, but this year women’s cricket within the RNZAF and the wider community got a real boost when Woodbourne hosted Interbase cricket.

In recent years Woodbourne has struggled to field any female players at the Ohakea or Auckland tournaments, due to our smaller base population, the difficulty of releasing trainees, and also that gosh-darn piece of water between the islands. But with the tournament on our doorstep, the time was ripe for a full contest, with each base represented.

We also invited a Nelson women’s club team to come over, and they played two 20-over matches against RNZAF women’s development sides. The dual benefit of these games was for RNZAF selectors to get a closer look at some of our talent coming through, and for Nelson to gain some experience and prove their viability within the Central Districts selection area.

The women’s interbase competition was a round-robin of Twenty20 games, with the top two teams playing a 40-over final on the Thursday. Much to everyone’s surprise, Woodbourne not only made the final but held on to win against Auckland.

But the highlight for me was the spirit of the game throughout the week, and the support shown amongst all three teams – Ohakea coming away with the RNZAF Cricket Association Cup for Women’s Team Sportmanship, and each team helping with scoring, umpiring, and sharing of players if required.

In all respects, women’s cricket is looking a lot healthier than just a year or two ago, and our aim now is to keep it growing from strength to strength.

NZDF World Master Teams Announced

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is sending a team of more than 220 competitors to the World Masters Games 2017 in Auckland from 21–30 April.

The Games, held every four years, is the world’s largest multi-sport event, with an estimated 25,000 athletes from 100 countries participating in 28 sports.

NZDF Sport Council chairwoman Captain Corina Bruce said the teams were ready to compete at this prestigious sporting event.

“The World Masters Games is a unique opportunity to showcase the breadth of sporting talent in the NZDF to New Zealand and abroad,” Captain Bruce said.

“This year the NZDF will be fielding a team that includes individual competitors, not just the traditional defence representative teams.”

NZDF sport promoted physical fitness, teamwork, development of personal qualities, comradeship and understanding, Captain Bruce said.

“We are proud of our sports personnel. The NZDF supports and promotes physical, mental and overall wellbeing for the benefit of performance in the workplace.”

The goal for the World Masters Games is to encourage participation in sport throughout life in events where competition and camaraderie are celebrated equally.

The 17 NZDF teams are competing in archery, athletics, basketball, cycling, football, golf, netball, orienteering, rugby, softball, touch, triathlon and volleyball.
Always on the lookout for a shot, I noticed a young lad taking a selfie during Auckland Anniversary weekend next to one of our Seasprite helicopters. He took great care composing his photo from a few different angles.

He looked really proud standing in front of our latest No. 6 Sqn SH-2G (I) Seasprite and I thought to myself, this could be one of our future pilots!

Photographer
Petty Officer Chris Weissenborn

CORRECTION
In the article Deploying overseas? Send a DJ, in last month’s issue of Air Force News, the second paragraph contained an error. The paragraph began: I am posted to the HQ Deployable Joint Inter-Agency Task Force (HQ DJIATF) as the Operations Officer, where I’m not busting out beats, but do make a difference. This very small (14 person) tri-service unit is something most in the RNZAF have never heard of; yet it fulfils a vital role within NZDF.

The paragraph should have read: I am posted to the HQ Deployable Joint Inter-Agency Task Force (HQ DJIATF) as the Operations Officer. This very small (14 person) tri-service unit is something most in the RNZAF have never heard of; yet it fulfils a vital role within NZDF.

The error is regretted.

NZDF TRANSITION SEMINAR
28–30 MARCH 2017

NZDF is providing a new 3-day Transition seminar specifically designed to support personnel leaving the NZDF after 12 years of military service. The seminar includes internationally renowned guest speakers who provide practical, effective information on CVs, interviews, the current job market, management strategies, financial planning, business opportunities and personal motivation.

NZDF specialists are also involved in providing information on entitlements, health, qualifications and other key areas of interest. This is a great opportunity for people thinking about leaving NZDF and is one way Defence can acknowledge your commitment and support and help you prepare for a life outside Defence.

Note: Personnel who have completed 6 years or more and are being medically discharged are also eligible for this seminar. To nominate for the seminar visit the NZDC course plan or DCTS website. For further information please contact Heather Dickson on 347 8174.
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