ANZAC DAY – WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

RNZAF AT EX SKYTRAIN

BASE WOODBOURNE – WOMEN IN COMMAND
FIRST WORD

By Wing Commander Berni Pothan

At the time of writing this First Word it has been two weeks today that I took over as Base Commander Woodbourne – “The Air Force starts here”. I have long aspired to lead this exciting base, in this wonderful part of the country, and it truly feels as if I have come home to a very welcoming and friendly family.

Post the Change of Command ceremony it was straight to work with planning and preparation for Cyclone Cook, with the folk at RNZAF Base Woodbourne ‘poised and ready’ to respond. Saturday arrived with the first of what I am sure will be many ceremonial duties! The Command Warrant Officer (CWO), W/O Annette Walding and I headed off early to Marsden Valley Cemetery in Nelson for the unveiling of a WWI War memorial area and statue which acknowledged the sacrifice given by our service men and women from 100 years ago to this present day. Our very own SGT Mason Robinson (story in the June issue of AFN) led this project and worked tirelessly to achieve its construction – he was fittingly acknowledged by Minister of Veterans’ Affairs David Bennett.

Sunday I was on representational duties at Omaka Aerodrome for the ‘Yealands Classic Fighters Omaka 2017’. I spent time talking with our newest family members, some of whom were from Recruit Course and had hitched a ride in the NH90 to Omaka. I also caught up with the Logistics Training Squadron team who were running our static displays, and took the opportunity to meet the local influential aviation members, in particular those with whom we already have strong, mutually respectful relationships.

Tuesday it was back to work and the arrival of the Exercise SKYTRAIN folk and aircraft. Base is buzzing – quite literally. This meant that last week Base also played host to numerous VIPs who knew that Woodbourne was the place to be! The CWO and I have conducted approximately 20 ‘Commander’s Calls’ – getting out and about, meeting all the folk that work in, on and around Woodbourne and sharing my Command Intent.

We accompanied some of our newer, younger members to town last Friday to sell poppies. This was a fabulous opportunity to meet the local people of Blenheim, but more importantly to give something back to assist and support our local RSA.

We have also had the pleasure of:

• celebrating the success of our trainees at their graduation ceremonies, including the first six Papua New Guinea Defence Force students who graduated with their Certificate in Aeronautical Maintenance Engineering;

• awarding a National Certificate to one of our team; and,

• presenting the New Zealand Defence Service medal to one of our hard working medics.

Base Woodbourne is a vibrant place with lots of things happening. Our people are excited to belong to our family; they proudly serve ensuring NZDF is a ‘Force for Good’, and they willingly go the extra mile. The calibre of many of the folk I have spoken with these past two weeks leaves me confident that the future of this Base, and the wider RNZAF, is bright.
Skytrain soars over the South

Over 200 personnel from the RNZAF’s No. 40 Sqn and the NZ Army took part in Exercise SKYTRAIN from Base Woodbourne, Marlborough for two weeks last month. The exercise, which focused on tactical low level flying, load dropping and night flying, took place over the skies of Marlborough and other South Island areas.
The exercise is an annual event, which prepares and trains RNZAF personnel to be able to accurately drop supplies into areas where planes are unable to land. Two C-130 Hercules were deployed for the exercise.

The exercise required months of careful planning due to being in a deployed environment away from home base. Detachment Commander for the exercise, Squadron Leader (SQNLDR) Blair Oldershaw said the exercise had required a “significant logistical overhead and required substantial coordination and organisation, to ensure that the flying operations had all the support they needed”.

“Keeping all of those personnel fed and housed during the exercise was no mean feat.”

The type of training involved in the exercise was vital to allow personnel to develop their skills in a controlled environment, SQNLDR Oldershaw said.

“We are attempting to expand the skills and experience of our crews so they are able to better respond to a wide variety of requests.

“Situations such as Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief can be very dynamic and require crews with a high degree of proficiency and competence – exercises such as this ensure that our crews remain able to react to almost any situation.”

The exercise required support services from units located at RNZAF Bases Ohakea and Woodbourne and Linton Military Camp. Supporting units also had the opportunity to conduct Air Movements operations including marshalling, rigging/derigging and securing loads.

Residents near the base in Woodbourne have been hugely supportive of the exercise and excited about the Hercules flying overhead, SQNLDR Oldershaw said.
Parts of the country were slammed last month with two major storms hitting in quick succession. Cyclone Cook saturated an already sodden East Cape straight after Hurricane Debbie forced the evacuation of many Whanganui and Rangitikei residents. The RNZAF were called on to capture the extent of the damage and help in the aftermath.

RNZAF Act Fast After Major Flooding

Following the Easter weekend storm, Cyclone Cook, an NH90 helicopter was deployed to conduct an aerial survey of areas in the North Island’s East Cape, which suffered the brunt of it.

“The survey assessed the scale of the damage wrought by the storm and helped civil defence authorities determine the next steps in the government’s emergency response,” Joint Forces New Zealand Commander Major General (MAJGEN) Tim Gall said.

About 500 New Zealand Defence Force personnel, as well as aircraft and trucks, were placed on standby as the country braced for what was described as the worst storm since 1968.

The NZDF monitored the situation and had about 200 personnel across the country that could be mobilised at two hours’ notice, MAJGEN Gall said. A further 300 personnel had also been placed on standby to support the government’s emergency response.

Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant General Tim Keating, said one of the roles of the New Zealand Defence Force was to be ready to support the Government response to significant natural events 365 days of the year.

“Cyclone Cook is such an event, and the resources – equipment and personnel – that are required are being readied to respond to assist New Zealanders in need,” Lieutenant General Keating said.

The storm brought strong winds and heavy rain that caused flooding, power outages, slips and fallen trees in the Bay of Plenty, Gisborne and Hawke’s Bay.

Earlier in the month dozens of Air Force and Army personnel helped to evacuate residents, fill sandbags, check on residents in flooded areas and man cordons when the area was drenched.
with rain from the tail end of Hurricane Debbie.

“We closely monitored the situation and were ready to provide additional assistance if required,” Joint Forces Acting Commander, Commodore Kevin McEvoy said.

Fifty NZDF personnel were deployed to help in Whanganui and Rangitikei after the councils declared local states of emergency.

The start of the year has been a soggy one for much of the country, with NZDF staff and machinery sent to help people trapped by floods. In March it sent several trucks and about 20 staff to evacuate schoolchildren trapped by torrential rain while camping in the Hunua Ranges.

A few days later, the NZDF sent 10 soldiers and two trucks to help evacuate at least 500 people stranded by floodwater in the Coromandel.
Trainee Pilots Reach New Heights at Ex Wiseowl

The latest batch of trainee pilots from No. 14 Squadron has just finished two weeks of training over Base Woodbourne, flying faster, further and higher than any of their predecessors. The trainees were on deployment at Exercise WISEOWL, learning single-pilot formation flying. This is the first RNZAF Wings Course to use the Air Force’s new T-6C Texan II aircraft, and the first WISEOWL to be held since their introduction in mid-2015.

The verdict about the new aircraft at the end of the exercise was overwhelmingly positive, with the 10 trainees thriving on the challenge of getting up close with the Texans.

One of the trainers on the exercise, Flight Lieutenant Nathan Barrack, said that in addition to increased performance, the Texans had a number of other advantages over their predecessor, the CT-4 Airtrainer.

For example, the Texans have a single in-line cockpit rather than side-by-side, meaning the instructor sits behind the trainee rather than beside them.

“This gives the trainees a lot more confidence in their own ability,” FLTLT Barrack said. “It means they are in front, they have a lot of situational awareness and are making decisions. With the instructor sitting beside them there was more of a safety-net feel to it, knowing they were there to bail them out.

“The instrumentation is also a lot better than the Airtrainers.”

The RNZAF gets the trainee pilots flying solo, in formation, at an earlier stage than most other air forces, FLTLT Barrack said.

“The pilots have done some general handling (flying when you can see), some instrument flying (flying when you can’t see) and some time in simulators, but those who have flown the most would have done 40 to 50 flights.

“We are now putting them in formation, with relatively low experience. We might be the only people in the world to get pilots up to the level of solo pilot in formation in this amount of time.”

However, he had no doubt about the ability of the trainees to handle the challenge.

“This is the smartphone generation and there is a lot of computer-based learning. We’ve got really good desktop trainers and the simulators, which we didn’t have with the Airtrainers.

“We also record the flight data during the training, which means the pilots can replay their flight on a computer screen.”
Again, we didn’t have that with the Airtrainers.”

Pilot Officer (PLTOFF) Richard O’Flaherty, one of the 10 trainee pilots at WISEOWL, is undaunted by the fact the RNZAF is also ahead of the pack in putting trainee pilots in relatively sophisticated planes like the Texans.

Most countries used the Texan as an advanced trainer, starting in something like the Airtrainer and then moving up to the Texans, PLTOFF O’Flaherty said.

“It’s a high-tech, high-performing plane to start off in, yet the new pilots are embracing it,” he said. “If you put in the work you get the results.

“We have simulators and avionics and desk-top trainers, which means we can go through everything on the ground.”

Another of the goals of WISEOWL was to get the trainees accustomed to performing in an unfamiliar environment, so they developed the skills to operate anywhere in the world.

FLTLT Barrack said at this stage of their training the group had flown only around Ohakea, in Manawatu, and there was a lot of learning involved in flying in a new location.

“There are a lot of subtle differences with operating in different areas – the different radio frequencies, different traffic, obviously the terrain, and the weather – and it’s a way for us to show them that despite the differences the same things still work.”

PLTOFF O’Flaherty conceded the trainees had been taken out of their comfort zone, having had to grasp different procedures after being used to flying around Manawatu.

“However flying around here, with all the mountains and the Marlborough Sounds, you can’t complain.

“A bit more concentration is required but at the same time it’s a lot of fun.”
As a Defence Force and as professional sailors, soldiers and airmen, we are a collective underpinned by our strong organisational values. It is really important, today more so than ever, to be living examples of these values as they form the core of our organisation and influence everything we do. In times of uncertainty and challenge, even in the most trying of times such as combat, it’s these organisational values that provide not only confidence and surety, but form the basis of decision making when all the normal information may not be available.

While culture underpins our behaviour it is also necessary to maintain high standards through a cohesive system of checks and balances of military command, which include the military justice system, orders, rules and regulations. This ensures we retain the position of a disciplined, law abiding and professional military. This system is not a closed in-house system of military command only, but through the Laws of New Zealand maintains legal independence and civilian oversight through the Government of New Zealand.

Our reputation is our currency, and without strong organisational values there is no foundation from which to build our reputation. Our relentless pursuit of excellence, constantly guided by these, our values, is what gives the Government and the people of New Zealand the utmost confidence in our Defence Force. As such we must always be prepared to challenge ourselves first when there is fault, but equally be proud of the work we do, regardless of where it occurs in NZDF as a Force for Good and a Force for New Zealand.

Chief of Defence Force, LTGEN Tim Keating, MNZM
A P-3K2 Orion aircraft from the RNZAF’s Airborne Surveillance and Reconnaissance Force and a Seasprite helicopter are among 45 aircraft taking part in a three-week warfighting exercise held by the world’s second oldest military partnership.

Exercise Bersama Shield 17 is a Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) exercise, being conducted from April 20 – May 9 in Singapore and Malaysia. The annual naval and air exercise is conducted under the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), which is made up of Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

The NZDF has also sent the Royal New Zealand Navy frigate HMNZS TE KAHA, the tanker HMNZS ENDEAVOUR and about 270 personnel to the exercise.

Acting Wing Commander Ben Till, who is leading the NZDF contingent, said TE KAHA was the flagship of the maritime task group, with Commanding Officer Commander Steve Lenik serving as the task group commander.

In the first phase of the exercise, the various forces would integrate, followed by five days of extensive training, he said.

“This will culminate in a two-day warfighting scenario against a fictional enemy, requiring the participants to test their skills in defending the maritime force from conventional attack.”

In addition to TE KAHA’s leading role, ENDEAVOUR will conduct replenishments at sea of participating ships, while the RNZAF Orion will engage in anti-submarine warfare and carry out maritime patrols.

Joint Forces New Zealand Commander Major General Tim Gall said the NZDF had taken part in the Bersama series of exercises for years because we recognised the importance of enhancing the tactical skills of our people as well as strengthening defence cooperation with our FPDA partners.

“Through the exercise, the five countries will be operating in a coalition environment and will be testing their ability to operate jointly in the event or threat of an armed attack on Malaysia or Singapore.

“The challenges posed by the exercise scenario will be realistic enough to test the mettle of the participants.”

TE KAHA, ENDEAVOUR, the Orion and the Seasprite are among 10 ships and 45 aircraft from all five nations taking part in the exercise.

The FPDA, established in 1971, is the world’s second oldest military partnership. Members commit to strengthen defence cooperation and to consult each other immediately in the event or threat of an armed attack in Malaysia or Singapore.
As dawn broke on the morning of April 25, thousands around the country turned out to remember those killed during wars and to think of those serving with the military today.

Services were held the length and breadth of New Zealand in the smallest of towns to our main cities. The mood, as always, was reflective, sombre and grateful to the men and women who had served and sacrificed.

The Air Force contributed to the national day with fly pasts over some of the events.

A Seasprite helicopter flew over Auckland for the dawn service as well as past the World Masters Games, held at the Viaduct.

A P-3 Orion flew past Swanson, Whitianga, Whangamata, Mt Maunganui, Rotorua, Otorohonga, Raglan and Auckland.

In Wellington, five of the Air Force’s T-6C Texan aircraft soared above crowds at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

And in a salute to history, the RNZAF’s Historic Harvard and a T-6C Texan flew in formation with a Spitfire and Avenger from Biggin Hill in fly pasts over the Manawatu. They flew above Sanson, Rongotea, Palmerston North, Ashhurst, Pohongina, Apiti, Huntville, Wanganui, Marton, Halcombe, Fielding, Bulls and Ohakea.
Anzac connection inspires Tate

Toni Tate has good reason to cherish the sacrifice of those who fought and were killed during wars, each Anzac Day. Serving in Wellington as Warrant Officer for Joint Forces New Zealand, W/O Tate has been part of the New Zealand Defence Force for more than 31 years. She joined the RNZAF in 1986, though her family history in the armed forces stretched back much longer.

“I initially wanted to join the Navy when I left school but after I discovered a family connection to the Air Force, I was really determined to take that route,” she said.

That connection was her great-grandfather, Air Commodore Trevor “Tiny” Watts White, who joined the North Canterbury Mounted Rifles Volunteers as a 13-year-old trumpeter in 1909. He moved on to become a sapper, as part of the Mounted Rifles, then served as a corporal with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force’s 1st Reinforcements in Gallipoli, spending 80 days in the trenches on the Turkish peninsula – where he saw his first plane, a German Taube dropping steel darts on the enemy. He also served in Samoa, Egypt and Palestine during his Army service.

“I always feel quite humble re-reading his story at this time of the year, it’s quite remarkable,” W/O Tate said. “I think about all the people who didn’t come home from the war. My great-grandfather came home but there were so many that didn’t and they were all so young.”

While serving in Gallipoli, he was selected to be seconded to the Royal Flying Corps for pilot training. After graduation he was posted to active service in France for 56 (Scout) Squadron, where his war-time adventures continued – he was shot down over the Arras Front and was a briefly a prisoner of war in Germany.

“There’s a picture of one of the planes he flew during WWI and it looks like it’s just going to fall apart – they were referred to as ‘kites’. It was a Maurice Farman used for reconnaissance missions. To survive all that and come back to New Zealand and continue with aviation is incredible.”

White was recalled to active service in World War II and appointed as Commanding Officer of Levin and Rongotai to set up pilot training for the war. He was then sent to Canada to be the NZ Air Force Liaison Officer for the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme.

One month before his death, he received an honorary Air Commodore rank, due to his continued association with the Air Force for many years after retiring as a Group Captain in 1951.

Tate’s own career has given her the chance to follow in her great-grandfather’s footsteps through a military career and learn more about the legacy he left. Her 18-year-old son has also recently applied to join the Air Force and is currently going through the recruiting process.

This Anzac Day, as well as remembering her proud armed forces ancestry, W/O Tate will cast her mind forward.

“I think about the future as well – more and more people are turning up to Anzac Day commemorations, which is great to see. I think about hope and inspiration. It’s important to remember that back then, they sacrificed so we can have our freedom today and we will not forget that.

“But Anzac Day is not just about our connection to the trenches of Gallipoli, it’s also about honouring all our service men and women who have served New Zealand, our contemporary veterans and families of our fallen.”

Anzac Day commemoration

New Zealand Defence Force
Anzac Day Commemorations
Focus on Western Front
New Zealand’s international World War I commemorations this year focused on the Western Front, with Anzac Day-related ceremonies in France and Belgium and the centenary commemorations of the battles of Messines and Passchendaele.

Personnel attended ceremonies in Longueval and Le Quesnoy in France, Gallipoli and Belgium. The Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal Tony Davies took a contingent to Rarotonga, where personnel took a few extra days to clean the war graves there.

Later in the year New Zealand will mark two World War I centenary commemorations, the Battle of Messines, on June 7 and the Battle of Passchendaele on October 12. Both ceremonies will be held in Belgium, at sites on the former Western Front.

It was on the Western Front that New Zealand made its most significant contribution to the war, and also where New Zealand suffered the greatest loss of life.

Anzac Day was also commemorated in Gallipoli with the traditional Dawn Service at the Anzac Commemorative Site and the New Zealand Service at Chunuk Bair later that morning.
Women Take Top Woodbourne Roles

For the first time, an all-women command team has taken charge of an Air Force base, with Wing Commander (WGCDR) Berni Pothan and Warrant Officer (W/O) Annette Walding assuming the appointments of Woodbourne Base Commander and Command Warrant Officer respectively.

For the past two years, WGCDR Mike Salvador has held the Commanding Officer role at the base. He was farewelled during a Change of Command Ceremony last month, where he inspected the personnel one last time before passing the Wigram Sword to WGCDR Pothan.

The new CO has been in the Air Force for more than 20 years and has held a variety of roles in operations, command and training.

"Coming back to Marlborough to lead Base Woodbourne has been a career goal for a long time,” she said.

"This is a significant senior command appointment, and not many get such an opportunity. I’m looking forward to working closely with the people who are the future of our organisation.”

W/O Walding has been in the Air Force for 29 years. She has a technical background and has held a number of trade, training and leadership roles.

"It’s a privilege to be able to help shape our organisation in a command position such as this,” she said.

"The future for the NZDF is exciting, and Woodbourne has a key role to play by providing the crucial foundation for airmen’s careers.”

Although Wing Commander Pothan isn’t the first female officer to take a significant lead role on a base, she is the first to be appointed a base commander in the current structure. Likewise, Warrant Officer Walding is not the NZDF’s first female Command Warrant Officer, but this is the first time women have been posted simultaneously into both command positions.

The pair have worked together several times over the past 15 years.

“We both have unique strengths and attributes, and history shows we are not afraid to challenge the status quo. I believe these are key traits in ensuring we collectively foster an environment where continuous improvement remains a key focus,” W/O Walding said.

At the Change of Command ceremony, WGCDR Pothan said the role was an “awesome responsibility”.

“Warrant Officer Annette Walding and I are proud to serve as your command team and we both are grateful to be back here at base Woodbourne once again. It has a great reputation, which is directly attributable to the superb leadership of each and every one of you.

“My success will not be mine alone – it will be a success of our collective.”

Base Woodbourne’s primary function is training the Air Force’s newest officers and airmen, and providing all specialist trade training up to advanced and post-graduate level.
Orion Crew Find Missing Fisherman
Safe but Sunburned

Crew on a P-3K2 Orion has found the Tongan fisherman, who was missing for three days last month in the Pacific Ocean, adrift in an inflatable life raft off the island of Eua.

The search, which was supervised by the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ), spotted the man waving with his oars about mid-afternoon, Air Component Commander, Air Commodore Darryn Webb said.

“The man was not in the fishing boat that the search request from the Tongan authorities had described but he clearly was in distress. He appeared well but sunburned,” Air Commodore Webb said.

The Orion crew passed on the information to the Tongan Navy, which dispatched a patrol boat to the life raft about 13 kilometres southeast of Eua. The aircraft then remained on scene until the patrol boat reached the life raft later that afternoon.

The NZDF sent the Orion to search for the fisherman two days before the rescue, following a request from the RCCNZ.

The man was fishing between the Tongan islands of Tongatapu and Eua when his 4.8-metre boat suffered engine failure. He rang his family on his mobile phone for help.

Tongan authorities had searched without success before requesting assistance from New Zealand.

Operations

New Minister of Defence Mark Mitchell

Mark Mitchell was appointed as the Minister of Defence late last month and he has a special association with the Air Force.

Both Mr Mitchell’s father and grandfather served with the Royal New Zealand Air Force, and he spent his early years living at Whenuapai in Auckland. His grandfather, Air Commodore Frank Gill, was a cabinet minister between 1975 and 1980 and was later appointed as New Zealand Ambassador to Washington.

Mr Mitchell joined the New Zealand Police in 1989 and became a member of the Dog Section and Armed Offenders’ Squad. After leaving the Police in 2002, he established an international private security firm. Working closely with the World Economic Forum, he helped establish logistic emergency response teams that provided humanitarian support in countries hit by natural disasters, such as the Philippines, Pakistan, and Haiti.

He served as Chairperson of Parliament’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee from 2014 to last year. He was then appointed the Minister for Land Information, Minister of Statistics, and Associate Minister of Justice. He is retaining the Land Information and Associate Justice portfolios, as well as taking over the Defence portfolio.

Last year he visited New Zealand Defence Force personnel at Camp Taji in Iraq with Minister Brownlee and the Leader of the Opposition Andrew Little.

Mr Mitchell is also the MP for Rodney and lives in Orewa with his family.
The Invictus Games are about strength, courage, comradeship, facing challenges and being the best you can be, no matter what you have been through. In fact, there are many more words that can be used to describe the power that is the Invictus Games.

Following a number of selection camps over the past six months, the 2017 Invictus Games team has been named. It comprises 25 strong individuals who epitomise what it is to be a sailor, soldier and airman – currently serving and veterans – in the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). Not to mention the wider training squad, which consists of almost 40 individuals – all inspiring people.

This year’s games in Toronto, Canada, from September 23–30 will be the largest and longest competition yet. It will comprise 600 wounded, injured and ill active duty and veteran men and women from 17 countries competing in 12 adaptive sporting events.

NZDF team captain Jason Pore (ex-Army) said the Invictus Games were a place where everyone could be equal and where everyone shared common ground.

“The Invictus Games unites all three services with one common goal – the rehabilitation of its soldiers through adaptive sport,” he said.

“Adaptive sport offers the opportunity to achieve success in a very short time period, to use this success to build self-confidence and focus on possibilities instead of dwelling on what can no longer be.”

Pore said he was very proud to be the team captain and hoped to develop a strong sense of purpose within the team this year.

“The mana I feel at being chosen to lead this team is immense. We are all warriors, brave warriors, and have come together to celebrate our strength and resilience, and to remind ourselves and the world that we will not be forgotten.”

Sport in the NZDF promotes teamwork, excellence, fitness and wellbeing – and it can help in the recovery of those who have been
injured, wounded or unwell as part of their service to our country.

Royal New Zealand Air Force Corporal Megan Rowe said there were no words to describe how she felt about being part of the NZDF Invictus Games team.

“Nothing I can say will ever accurately portray what it feels like to be a member of this team. Being part of this team has given me the greatest sense of belonging I have ever felt,” she said.

Royal New Zealand Navy Lieutenant Dan Crawford said to him the Invictus Games were about showing that, no matter what, you could still achieve your goals.

“I see competing in the Invictus Games as a way of proving that there shouldn’t be any restriction on somebody just because they have a medical diagnosis,” he said.

Team members said they were indebted to their families, whose support had not only helped in their recovery but allowed them to continue to work as valued colleagues who contribute to the Defence Force, and to those people they serve.

Pore said he strongly believed that the road to recovery was within the biggest support group – and that was whanau.

The team could not participate without the generous support of so many, in particular that of the key sponsors – Auckland RSA, Christchurch Memorial RSA, Fulton Hogan, BLK, Offlimits Trust and the Fallen Heroes Trust.

Fulton Hogan Workforce Development Manager Kenny Didham said: “Our sponsorship of the Invictus Games team is about supporting brave and courageous people who have served their country at home or abroad, and helping them to achieve their goals while working through their own personal challenges.”

The team’s journey can be followed on facebook.com/InvictusGamesNZ and Instagram.com/NZDFInvictusTeam.

A/CPL Megan Rowe gives it all she’s got in the four minute row

FLTLT Jules Gilligan practices her deadlifts
Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Thorne Davidse had the perfect finish to his Advanced Trade Training course when he was awarded the PPG Aerospace Trade Training Trophy for highest results.

The five trainees on the course, held at RNZAF Base Ohakea in 2016, spent three months learning all aspects of preparing and finishing aircraft surfaces.

LAC Davidse, a Safety and Surface Technician, impressed his instructors from day one with his eagerness to learn, attention to detail, and work ethic, and achieved the highest overall course average.

For LAC Davidse the course has been the highlight so far of his four-year RNZAF career.

“After going through all the steps, to see the final product ready to be fitted to the aircraft, is incredibly rewarding,” he said.

Currently posted to No. 6 Squadron, he looks after the safety equipment and flying clothing, as well as performing “touch-ups” on the surfaces of the RNZAF’s SH-2G(I) Seasprite naval helicopters.

Having moved to New Zealand from South Africa when he was 14, Leading Aircraftman Davidse’s family settled in western Auckland. He now lives in Whenuapai with his partner, and is a keen sportsman in his spare time.
In 1893, New Zealand celebrated the achievement of becoming the first nation to grant equal voting rights to women. A further step towards gender equality was achieved in 2000 with the United Nations Security Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, which advocates for advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda internationally.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is divided into the following:
• the protection of women
• the prevention of gender-based discrimination
• increasing women’s participation in conflict and peacekeeping roles.

New Zealand, along with 45 other nations, committed to actively progressing UNSCR 1325. Our UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan outlines how New Zealand intends to apply the WPS agenda, with much of the responsibility for this resting with the NZ Police and Defence forces.

The NZDF is making progress on the national plan through a number of pathways. These include educating our workforce about UNSCR 1325 by adding WPS modules to Defence training and implementing programmes to increase female representation across our force.

All trades in the NZDF, including SAS selection, are now open to women and we recently had a women-led peacekeeping mission in South Sudan. Within the RNZAF, we have added to our list of women group captains, which demonstrates a commitment to progressing women into senior leadership positions.

The NZDF also released recently the Commanders WPS Handbook, and is investigating mechanisms for including WPS in pre-deployment training.

If the NZDF is to remain a significant leader in WPS in this new millennium, the WPS agenda should be considered in all training for all levels of Defence personnel. Making WPS a foundation within the way the NZDF does business will ensure each of us understands how our beliefs about gender influence and divide us as individuals, as communities and as the nation’s Defence Force.

In the global business of advancing Women, Peace and Security, the responsibility to truly make a difference rests with each of us. Lieutenant General David Morrison, the Australian of the Year in 2016 and a previous Australian Chief of Army, said: “If you’re not up to it [making a difference], find something else to do with your life. There is no place for you amongst this band of brothers and sisters.”

This Band of Brothers and Sisters

By FLTLT Libby Reardon

UNMO to Timor-Leste, WGCdr Lorena Thomas

Operationalising the WPS agenda in South Sudan MAJ Wendy Wright (right)
Exploring the Antarctic Peninsula

By Pilot Officer Sylvie Admore

At 100m above sea level we were plunged into whiteness. The cloud blurred the line between snow and sky as we picked our way hesitantly across the glacier. We had been in Antarctica for less than 10 hours and were already faced with monstrous crevasses and frustratingly low visibility. Our two rope teams struggled to find a path through a maze of ice and our goal of climbing Mt Scott seemed to fade as we became increasingly unsure of our exact location. I looked back on the months of preparation and excitement and hoped it wouldn’t culminate in the choking cumulus obscuring our route to the summit.

The New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust (NZAHT) funds an annual expedition to Antarctica as a means of inspiring Kiwis to get out and explore the physical world. It is primarily concerned with the preservation of historic huts in Antarctica, including Sir Edmond Hillary’s hut which is the original foundation of Scott Base.

It was recognised that continued preservation of such sites was going to require ongoing public interest and support for these resource-heavy projects: that’s where we came in.

Four young New Zealanders (up to age 35) were selected to join the NZAHT Expedition to act as ambassadors for the trust, as well as the environmental and cultural heritage which was so unique to the deep South.

In December last year, via a Skype interview towards the end of my Initial Officer Training Course, I was told that I had been selected to go to Antarctica.

While I had a reasonable amount of mountaineering
experience, I believe that my selection for the Expedition was strongly influenced by my experiences in the RNZAF. Many of the skills and qualities sought by the trust had been directly emphasised during my training. These included team work, commitment, adaptability, resilience and communication skills. Selection for the expedition really impressed upon me the applicability of our RNZAF training to opportunities outside, as well as inside the NZDF.

Working with three others on a rope to navigate steep terrain and crevasses is not so different from operating in a military team. There is still the same satisfaction of achieving something collectively that would be impossible without the support and skills of those around you. The Mt Scott Expedition was no different.

After struggling for hours through the cloud surrounding the mountain we finally climbed into the sunlight. The whole landscape was revealed in the space of a few metres. Massive expanses of ice ground to a halt at the foot of rocky peaks while our route up the glacier shone before us, mercifully free of crevasses. We reached the summit at 9pm, just as the Antarctic sun began its slow descent towards the horizon. The peaks around us glowed pink and curved towards the south in an unbroken vista of snow and ice. Our seasoned mountain guide, Kev Nicholas, wiped a tear from his eye and declared the view from Mt Scott to be one of the most incredible things he’d seen in his life.

I looked round at the faces of the rest of our team, most of them speechless with eyes wide, taking in Antarctica. The shining euphoria at what we had achieved together, combined with absolute wonder at the environment around us is a feeling I will never forget.
Art in an Unlikely Gallery

By Rebecca Quilliam

A bustling transit area where goods are hustled in and out of Woodbourne, is an unlikely gallery for works of art to be displayed, but it is here where Peter Tansey hangs creations he has made from materials that would otherwise be discarded.

"I put them there because it’s my workspace,” Mr Tansey explained.

The building’s wooden walls, lined with stacked cardboard boxes, a weighing machine and equipment for transporting the goods, are dotted with works of art painstakingly crafted by the aeronautical transit storeperson.

The first work was the Air Force roundel. Its inception started when the clothing department sent through hundreds of buttons off Military Service Dresses (MSDs) and flight jackets, which were to be thrown away.

When Mr Tansey, who also makes mosaics out of tiles, saw them, he said “we’re not throwing those away”, and set about putting them to artistic use.

The results are striking. Following his roundel, Mr Tansey created an Anzac piece for last year’s commemorations, a silver fern and a tribute to Base Support flight – featuring a Hercules and 1106 buttons.

“I get some comments from people who come into the building,” he said.

Mr Tansey’s latest work – an eagle above RNZAF – is made from buttons and epauletts from the three services. The material came after a change in uniform.

“They take a bit of planning – maybe one or two weeks. Then most are done in about eight hours. The Anzac one took the longest time – about two or three weeks after work in front of the telly. It keeps me busy, keeps me off the streets.”

The work is time consuming, with Mr Tansey cutting the loops off the backs of every button before they are glued to the backing, but he said he enjoyed the process.

His next piece will be a salute to Blenheim, near Woodbourne, and will feature the region’s famous wineries.

“I just do it for fun. Hopefully they don’t get put on the scrapheap when I leave.”

Peter Tansey with his art
RNZAF
Through the Eyes of USAF

By SMSGT Kristi N. Steck, United States Air Force

Recently, I had the unique opportunity to attend an RNZAF Warrant Officer Promotion Course as a United States Air Force (USAF) international student. I was notified of my selection just 15 days after submission, but it was truly an honour to represent my country and service. With less than 30 days to prepare, my plate was full of learning as much as I could about New Zealand and its Defence Force.

From the very beginning, many people from the USAF and RNZAF set me up for success. Email and social media played a huge part in bridging the gap, so by the time I arrived I felt like I was part of the group.

Stepping into a new environment, especially a foreign one, can be pretty intimidating but Kiwis are so friendly and proud that it was easy to reach ‘peak rapport’ early on.

The curriculum was challenging, and it forced us to think outside the box and place ourselves in uncomfortable and emotional situations, but we tackled each assignment as a team. Our limits were tested but, in the end, we all walked away learning a bit more about ourselves. It was an incredible journey and I’m very lucky to have shared it with such an awesome group of people!

One of my key roles was to add a USAF perspective. Before I arrived, I researched the RNZAF and was surprised at the differences in size, including personnel, aircraft and bases. Even though it may seem like these differences would have us operating like night and day, the truth is, we all face the same challenges.

We are constantly asked to do more with less and as leaders, we are expected to translate this vision into a sustainable future.

Throughout the four weeks, we heard from key leaders and were asked how we could influence change. Thinking strategically, building teams and networks, and leading by example were common themes. Whether there are 2500 people or 350,000, we have accepted our role and will continue to motivate and empower our junior enlisted and officer corps towards mission success.

I feel truly honoured to have been a part of the course and wish my fellow classmates and Directing Staff much success as they lead the RNZAF into the future. In addition to the friendships, I’m walking away with a renewed purpose and a greater sense to lead. Thank you for the opportunity and the amazing journey.
Over the next few years, Defence personnel will start to see improvements to the places where they work, live and train as the biggest-ever regeneration of our camps, bases and training areas gets under way.

In August last year, the Government approved a $1.7 billion programme of investment to upgrade Defence buildings, infrastructure and facilities over the next 15 years.

Initially this investment will focus on health, safety and compliance measures and some old barracks will start to be replaced at NZDF camps and bases. Planning for large projects will take place during this time, and about 2020 work will start on bigger projects in the pipeline.

The aim is to build an integrated estate that will accommodate a rapidly changing world and new equipment, giving us future options and choices.

Some of the projects are already under way but many are still in the development stage. For our Air Force some of the capital projects planned include:

**RNZAF Base Auckland**

The base at Whenuapai was established in 1937 and most buildings are between 30 and 70 years old. Many are not fit for purpose.

Upgrades in the pipeline include new barracks, with work due to start in 2017–18. With the completion of the Aviation Medicine Unit, in the early term you will see a much-awaited new gymnasium facility, and a new medical and dental unit complete the health precinct.

The intersection next to the base is congested with competing vehicle and foot traffic from base users, commercial vehicles and those attending the adjoining primary school and daycare centre. The project funds a safe design for all users and a visitor parking area. This work will be bundled with a project to enhance the main gate entrance, which will improve the layout, safety, traffic flow and security.

Plans also include flightline fencing to make sure visitors to the base are kept away from flight areas and the replacement of paved areas for heavy vehicles, due to start in 2017–18.

New purpose-built buildings for 40 Squadron and PTSU are planned for 2019–20. The operations squadron will be accommodated in a new facility next to the flightline and will consolidate 40 Squadron functions into a single building. It is envisaged that this project will provide a generic design for other squadrons to be amalgamated into single purpose-built structures elsewhere on the base.

From 2020–21 building will start on mid-life upgrades of the two arch hangars, a new base operations and fire rescue building, a workshop, and the next phase of the replacement of paved areas for heavy vehicles.

**RNZAF Base Ohakea**

There have been major upgrades at Ohakea over recent years but other areas still need work. Over the next few years we’ll invest in safety measures including flight-line fencing to make sure visitors to the base are kept away from flight areas.
The refueling section will gain new facilities, which include a covered tanker parking area. Improved hazardous waste storage facilities and an improved wastewater treatment plant are also planned as we strengthen safety and compliance. Flight-line fencing is required to meet Civil Aviation Authority regulations in the event Base Ohakea is required to be an alternative runway for long-haul 747 passenger aircraft. Taxi-way Alpha is expected to be replaced in 2018–19 and a replacement for the Logistics Warehouse and General Service Workshop is planned for 2019–20. The following year work could start on a new base headquarters building and a new physio and medical facility.

In the financial year 2019–20 there are plans to reconfigure an area west of the air terminal to improve the air movements freight staging area to accommodate stores and equipment in a secure area immediately before aircraft loading.

**RNZAF Base Woodbourne**

Former base commander Wing Commander Mike Salvador said: “Base and airfield security fencing are among the top priorities in the pipeline for RNZAF Base Woodbourne. This work is to commence on the northern side of SH6 in April 2017, with the southern side of SH6, the main airfield, in financial year 2018–19.

“Woodbourne is the only Air Force base without a perimeter security fence and also the only base with shared military/civil use. Internal fencing will also be constructed to ensure the security and safety of civilian students undertaking polytechnic training onsite and to separate Air Force and NZDF training from civil commercial operations.”

Around 2020–21 there are plans to build a new, purpose-built fire rescue facility. Other projects that could start in 2022 include a new main gate and entrance to the base, hazardous waste storage facilities, upgrades to engineer training workshops, new accommodation and a base headquarters facility. These infrastructural developments will provide the NZDF with the flexibility to exploit future tri-service training opportunities and potentially expand the training delivered at Woodbourne. Overall, the estate regeneration programme for Woodbourne has been planned to contribute to the attainment of the F35 aim of an integrated Defence Force.
In stark contrast from a cold wintry experience late last year the current Limited Service Volunteer (LSV) Course got a reminder of how exhilarating and wild the New Zealand outdoors can be. More than 100 personnel from Youth Development Unit (YDU), South, including LSV Company and staff found themselves completely cut off in the middle of multiple State Highway 7 road closures during wildfires in the Canterbury High Country sparking HQ JFNZ emergency response activity to ensure the safe and timely extraction of the Company.

These situations highlight the exciting and varied nature of YDU. In support of youth development initiatives, YDU operates to provide the life skills, motivation, learning, training and vocational options that will allow youth to confidently and successfully establish their place within and contribute to New Zealand society.

In order to carry out this mission YDU conducts three courses pitched to different demographics of NZ youth:

• The Bluelight youth life skills courses are a one week motivational course for 14-18 year olds and operated on behalf of the Bluelight Community Organisation and in conjunction with NZ Police.

• Service Academy courses are run in support of the MoE School Service Academies who provide an alternative vocational path in the final year of schooling. Many of the students on these courses are seeking a career in the NZDF.

• Limited Service Volunteer courses provide a six week NZDF-provided course for 17 to 25 year olds who are assessed by MSD as being at risk of long term unemployment. The objective of LSV are to enhance the self-discipline, confidence, cooperation and respect values in these young people in order for them to successfully enter the NZ workforce or gain further education.

Officer Commanding YDU South, Lieutenant Commander Grant Boore, coordinated the emergency response when the bush fires effectively isolated the LSV Company during the latter stages of their final field exercise.

“For a brief but exciting time the unit became the focus of attention at HQ JFNZ as the Joint Forces operational support team swung into action. The fact that the entire Company of 107 personnel was safely evacuated under our own transport arrangements and safely deployed back to Burnham Military Camp during such an emergency is a testimony to the training and professionalism of the YDU(S) staff.”

Chief People Officer Mrs Debbie Francis inspects the latest Bluelight Course at Burnham

Fires breaking out along State Highway 7

3 Platoon, LSV Company S01/17 Course at Loch Katrine during FTX-3
Dear Devon devotees and Former F27 Fokker Friendship friends.

17 July 2017 will mark 25 years since the closing of NATTS and the fantastic Fokkers final formation flypast. Over the weekend 14–16 July 2017 some decrepit Devonators together with some old Fokkers will be gathering together in Christchurch to reminisce and spin yarns of when they were young(er) with more, and/or less grey, hair. So please note it in your diary and pass on to people that may have worked on, flown in, photographed, or just think back fondly to their time on NATTS when Friendships were more than just “mutual affection and regard between individuals (usu. exclusive of sexual or family bonds)” – Concise Oxford.

14th July
Evening gathering at Wigram Base (old No1 Officers Mess)

15th July
Daytime activity followed by dinner and dance in the Aircraft Hall at the Air Force Museum. This is open to all serving and ex-RNZAF pers as everyone loves a good Friendship.

16th July
Recover and head home.

Point of Contact:
SQNDLR Brett Marshall, XO Air Force Museum (note that XO is short for executive officer and not used, in this case, as a symbol of affection)
brett.marshall@nzdf.mil.nz

Check out the “NATTS Reunion” Facebook page for ongoing details.
Shave for a Cure

By Private Sarah Coote-Shepherd

Shave for a Cure is the annual fundraising event for the Leukaemia and Blood Cancer (LBC) foundation. The LBC foundation receives no government funding, so this annual event is imperative to help support the six Kiwis a day who are diagnosed with either a blood cancer or related condition.

This inspired the team at Defence Health School in Burnham to give a little and pay it forward. The team of six, led by Sergeant Brad Gordon, put their heads together, set a goal of $500 and decided to grow out their luscious locks for maximum shock value on Shaving Day.

The team then set about promoting the cause to achieve the fundraising goal. That target was smashed out of the park, with a total of $1415 reached at last count.

This was mostly a student-based team, but it didn’t end there. The School Warrant Officer, Jase Trevarton, got in on the cause too, joining the team and adding Air Force flair. After offering his locks for auction at the last minute W/O Trevarton, who hates the spotlight, took it in his stride, and the winning bid of $40 was made by Private Sam Stannard.

Private Stannard, who got the honour of the first cut, seemed eager to claim his prize, and got in there with the clippers quickly.
All the participants’ hair was shaved to a clipped number one, back-to-basics style. Needless to say, it has been a bit cold for them since! All in all it was a great afternoon and the team raised a lot of money for a great cause.

Special thanks from those involved to all those who donated and sponsored the team, and those who came down on the day to give support. Great work to the DHS team of W/O Trevarton, SGT Gordon, PTE Phizacklea, PTE Sugar, PTE Stannard, and PTE Braithwaite for going out of their way to make suffering Kiwis’ lives a little easier. After all, that is what the NZDF is all about.
Surfing for Glory

By Corporal Connor Jensen

With high hopes of off-shore winds meeting an easterly swell, 12 of Whenuapai’s top surfers set out to find long, smooth walls of water to shred in the hope of winning the 2017 Air Force Boardriders championship.

Mahia and Gisborne provided the beaches for the competition and organisers Flying Officer Jesse Liddicoat and Corporal Carlin O’Neill conducted three heats at Mahunga beach.

With competition already so fierce, one of the judges had to resort to three decimal places, before the top six were named for the semi-finals. The semi-finals were delayed due to unfavourable conditions so riders were left to free-surf, exploring more of the Mahia coastline. One of the contestants was injured during this time which left a five-surfer straight final.

When conditions improved and the long awaited swell finally hit from a low pressure system to the east we hit the water at Gisborne’s Wainui beach.

Perfect conditions presented themselves for the final with a light off-shore breeze meeting a 2m swell. With the hooter going, Leading Aircraftman Elliot Roe and Corporal O’Neill were quickly into the action scoring several waves before anyone else had a chance to paddle for one.

I waited it out and half way through the heat managed to drop into a more solid set wave gaining a very long ride and even claiming a barrel (commonly referred to as a Bazza).

Then Leading Aircraftman Ollie Beaumont started the competition. He dropped down huge faces with the whitewater bouncing twice as high as the breaking wave. Corporal O’Neill whipped out a skilful 360 degree rotation on one of his waves and the judges knew it would be close.

Final Results:

1st CPL Connor Jensen
2nd CPL Carlin O’Neill
3rd LAC Ollie Beaumont

A huge thank you to our sponsors; Cam at Back Door and Helen at Stash-it. Please check out Backdoor at Northwest for all surf apparel and Stash-it on Fred Taylor Drive for Surf/Ski bags or anything else that might need an outdoor cover. Also a thank you to Carlin, Jesse, and Elliot for organising the event.

For those that want to be a part of future Boardriders events, please contact Corporal Mike Mulderry.
VENUE: Upper Hutt CrossFit
DIVISIONS: Scaled, RX and Masters
ENTRY FEE: $70 | ENTRIES OPEN: 30 APRIL - 30 JUNE
FACEBOOK PAGE: nzmilchamps17 | EMAIL: nzmilchamps17@gmail.com
Notices

NO. 40 SQUADRON FOUR WINDS
There will be a No. 40 Sqn get-together to acknowledge 74 years since the formation of No. 40 Sqn.
The event will be held at the RNZAF Base Auckland WO SNCO’s Mess on Saturday, June 10, starting at 5pm.
All ex-squadron members are invited to attend.
Register by emailing 40SQN4WINDS@nzdf.mil.nz

NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE, INDUSTRY AND NATIONAL SECURITY FORUM 2017
Emerging Technologies and Cybersecurity Capabilities in Support of National Security Agencies
Date: October 10–11, 2017
Location: Westpac Stadium, Wellington
Website: www.nzdia.co.nz
Email: contact@nzdia.co.nz
This year’s NZDIA Forum will be held at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington. This Forum focuses on New Zealand’s future Defence and National Security capabilities with projected spending of over $20bn in the next 15 years. With a broader focus on technology, cybersecurity and major equipment replacement programmes, it is a must-attend event for information exchange and networking with New Zealand Ministry of Defence, Defence Forces, National Security Agencies and Industry.

DIRECTOR OF DEFENCE SECURITY
The effective management of security incidents and investigations is part of good security practice.
The Directorate of Defence Security (DDS) has established the Security Incident Response Centre (SIRC) in order to fulfil its requirements under GOV7 of the Protective Security Requirements. SIRC are responsible for monitoring, assessing, managing and responding to major security incidents in order to determine the cause and extent (compromise) of the security incident.
Reporting a major security incident can be achieved through using the following link found on the DDS intranet page.

While I was photographing the Atatürk Wreath Laying Ceremony on Anzac Day, where the heroism and self-sacrifice of both the ANZAC and Turkish forces in the Gallipoli campaign is remembered, a young girl provided a lighter moment during a poignant moment of the service.

Photographer
A/SGT Amanda McErlich
It’s all I need for air defence against the flu!

W/O Cedge Blundell

The flu vaccine not only reduces your risk of getting sick, but also prevents you passing the flu on to work colleagues and course mates, your family/whanau, housemates, and even the locals in places you could deploy to.

It’s free, safe, effective and cannot give you the flu.

So roll your sleeve up to protect yourself this winter.

Military personnel – get yours free at your Defence Health Centre.

NZDF Civilian staff – get your free voucher for a flu injection from your GP by emailing lisa.macdonald@nzdf.mil.nz