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OUR MISSION
The RNZAF will provide New Zealand with relevant, responsive and effective Air Power to meet its security interests.

OUR VISION
An agile and adaptive Air Force with the versatility essential for NZDF operations.

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New Zealand Government
I n our line of business, when you kick off the year you never quite know how it’s going to pan out. If you’re like me, that’s part of the appeal. You get ready for the things you know will happen, you plan for the things that might or might not, then you adjust and adapt.

And that’s how it was this year for many in the RNZAF. As the year was getting underway, those at Woodbourne had little idea they would soon be deployed to Nelson to support the wildfire response. They did a great job. And rightly, it’s first and foremost our operations that should get the most attention. During the year we deployed aircraft to support elections in the Solomon Islands, to enforce UN sanctions in the North Pacific, and to support our operations in the Middle East. We conducted some significant search and rescue operations in the Pacific and in our own mountain ranges. And then of course there were the tragic March 15 attacks: the response required RNZAF action on many fronts and I was pleased with how everyone immediately kicked in, knuckled down and made everything happen with no fuss – just as we would expect.

There were many more domestic and regional operations: Antarctic support, maritime surveillance, support to agencies including Ministry for Primary Industries, Customs, Police and Department of Conservation. And exercises to hone our skills: Talisman Sabre in Australia, Mobility Guardian in the United States and Bersama Lima in Malaysia, among others. Domestically, Bluebird, Blackbird, Nocturnal Reach and Pekapeka stood out. In the training world we saw pilot and Air Warfare Officer training get underway at No. 42 Squadron on the new KA350, and a fair bit of agility at Central Flying School and No. 14 Squadron while the T-6C Texan fleet returned to form.

Some of our most important work this year was advancing major projects: the P-8A Poseidon and C-130J Hercules stand out but there are others, including infrastructure at Whenuapai and Ohakea.

In the airworthiness world we embarked on Defence Aviation Rules, in time for our fixed wing fleet replacement. In the area of people development there was some inspiring work – Operation Tangata Kanorau is just one of the stand-outs. Of course there’s a lot more that I haven’t been able to squeeze into this First Word.

We may take it for granted sometimes, but all of these achievements require a high degree of teamwork. And every team requires talented, committed, and adaptable individuals with the right attitude. I want to thank you all for the work you’ve done for New Zealanders this year. You made a difference.

Next year there will be plenty to keep us focused and undoubtedly some surprises to keep us on our toes. For now though, for all of those who can, I encourage you to make the most of the holiday period. It’s a time to take the foot off the accelerator and to turn our minds to family and friends – a chance to reconnect.

As you do, keep an eye out for your team mates - safety during the silly season is always an issue, but for some others this time of year can also be a time of isolation.

Wherever you find yourself this year, I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas from Tricia, myself and our family.
NH90 on Resupply Mission to Subantarctic Islands

An NH90 has left on HMNZS Canterbury to help with a resupply and maintenance mission to New Zealand’s remote and inhospitable Subantarctic Islands.

The Royal New Zealand Navy conducts the annual operation to the Auckland and Campbell Islands on behalf of government agency partners Department of Conservation (DoC) and MetService.

Because of the scope of work required this year a No. 3 Squadron NH90 helicopter is embarked on Canterbury to supplement its SH-2G(I) Seasprite helicopter.

Air Force crew and maintenance personnel have embarked, along with members of New Zealand Army’s 5 Movement Company, who will assist with the transfer of supplies between ship and shore.

Maritime Component Commander Commodore Tony Millar said the mission this year was unique.

“Along with 45 staff and researchers, we will also be joined by five conservation dogs,” Ms Rodgers said. “They’ll be checking the island to ensure it remains pest free, as well as undertaking important species monitoring work.”

Maintenance on tracks and boardwalks and DoC structures used for biodiversity work would also take place, she said.

“I’ve never embarked personnel from all three of our Services, the wider NZDF, and our government agency partners to the islands before, so this is an indication of the importance we have given this operation,” he said.

Important work would be conducted by DoC, MetService and the NZDF’s Defence Technology Agency during the operation, Commodore Millar said.

“New Zealand’s Subantarctic Islands are a World Heritage Site, so ensuring they are pest and predator free and continuing to provide a rich and pristine environment is vital,” he said.

“They also act as a sort of early warning system for New Zealand in terms of meteorological forecasting and oceanographic research, so it’s a mission we take very seriously.”

DoC expedition lead Kirsten Rodgers was not daunted by the enormity of the task for their staff over the next month.

“Of course, none of this work could be conducted without the assistance of NZDF personnel and helicopters – not to mention HMNZS Canterbury. It’s always a privilege to work together with them on this important mission.”

Improved maritime safety through improved wave forecasting is one of the key aims of the Defence Technology Agency staff from the mission. They will be recovering one wave buoy and launching another south of Campbell Island.

Last year the wave buoy measured the biggest wave ever recorded in the Southern Hemisphere, at 23.8 metres.

Defence Technology Agency Science Researcher Sally Garrett said the data collected from the buoy had been used to improve accuracy of wave forecasts by up to 20 per cent, increasing the safety of all mariners in the Southern Ocean south of 47 degrees.

“This data also informs the design and construction of RNZN’s future fleet,” Ms Garrett said.
Living in Antarctica

After the initial excitement of stepping off the aircraft onto the frozen continent, finishing off the necessary induction and safety briefs, I began to settle in. Static electricity builds through your feet as you walk through the corridors that connect throughout the base. The trick is to discharge the static on the walls before you unintentionally shock yourself or anyone else in your path.

It doesn’t take long to unpack my belongings from my few bags containing the allocated 38.5kg allowance from which I will attempt to live over the months ahead. With minimal space in our accommodation, only slightly larger than a one-person barrack room with a set of bunks in the corner, there are few places to put my belongings. This allows for a fun game of Tetris, keeping in mind I’ll need to save an even amount of space for my roomie.

In our room there is only one small window at the top of the wall in the left-hand corner, too far up for me to reach to open the shutters even if I was to stand on the top bunk. Not much room for activities but as a room only used for sleeping in, it’s not a bad deal overall.

The food here is pretty good but a little self-control and a good exercise regime is a must given that a general day includes baked goods for morning and afternoon tea, hot buffet style meals for lunch and dinner, dessert every night, not to mention the waffles, hash browns, bacon and eggs every Sunday for brunch.

There are many places to relax and unwind after a hard day’s work. There’s a library with a great selection of books, a movie room with more movies and TV than I will ever have the time to watch, a lounge which has a great view of the New Zealand flag, the gym, the bar (with a good selection of soda), the computer labs and plenty of outdoor walks and activities.

Working in the logistics support role, I support the Cargo handler in the movement of goods and people coming to and from Christchurch. I also assist with some movements around the Antarctic continent with daily trips over to McMurdo, the American base, to collect or send cargo.

I am lucky enough to be part of a great team here at Scott Base working with Antarctica NZ to support the many important scientific activities and environmental work.

This is a great experience and I would highly recommend this deployment to others. Antarctica New Zealand has positions available each year for military personnel to apply for. If you are interested and do get the opportunity, you won’t be disappointed.
The Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) scenario was centred on a fictional island Afluria that had just been devastated by a cyclone. The aftermath gave the team a perfect opportunity to hone their skills and confirm the need for similar ongoing exercises in the future, with the plan being to make it bigger and increase the number of medics from the trade participating.

The team of medics set up camp for the week-long exercise, sleeping in tents or under hoochies, eating out of rat packs and digging their own latrine.

“They week began with dealing with some trauma cases scattered here and there,” medic Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Claudia Karlsson said. This was followed by a mass casualty event, which was supported by the Base Contingency Force, she said.

“We were triaging the patients during the mass casualty incident because there were more patients than medics and more demand on the equipment than what we were carrying on us.”

Complicating the scenario was political unrest the group had to deal with near the end of the week, resulting in the team needing to pack up the camp and move to avoid political violence. They were assisted by Environmental Health (EH) specialists who helped with all the EH requirements, LAC Karlsson said.

“In that regard it’s very realistic, because often when we are deploying their amenities are not like what we have in New Zealand. In a disaster-stricken place there would be disease and sewerage and unclean conditions that would further add to sickness and possibly cause death.”
Included in the exercise was a six-hour period with a constant stream of patients needing to be treated, she said.

“Some would have minor injuries, like heat stroke, to a patient needing full-on resuscitation.

“There was one patient who had gone into anaphylactic shock. In the scenario he had an allergic reaction to some nuts. The initial treatment wasn’t working, so I had to look at other options and it was really good to practice, because that type of condition could easily present itself to us.”

All the team were given leadership opportunities and LAC Karlsson said her time at the top happened during a vehicle crash, with severe injuries and no chance for an aeromedical evacuation.

“Not only did I have to keep relaying information over the radio, keeping in touch with headquarters, I was also trying to organise other options for evacuations, keeping in mind the patient’s condition and how stable they were. That was probably the most challenging thing, keeping on top of everything and wanting to do the right thing.”

The exercise was beneficial because it gave the medics a chance to work together, LAC Karlsson said.

“Medics are usually tasked to work solo with other trades. With HADR situations, we would be going as a group, so it was really important to get that cohesion and get to know each other’s strengths and weaknesses.

“I really felt that during the exercise I honed my skills and I learnt new things as well.”
Corporal Reiner Angelo has been awarded Airman of the Year for his exemplary performance as an aircraft technician, as well as his work with young people, encouraging them to think about taking up technical subjects that could lead them into a career with the Air Force.

CPL Angelo has had no hesitation raising quality observation reports. This led to rectifying aircraft maintenance scheduling related to B757 engine turbine disks. This demonstrated a high regard for detail, personal courage, and commitment to safety and airworthiness.

CPL Reiner Angelo has also been involved since the inception of Operation Tangata Kanorau and School to Skies, programmes designed to ignite a spark in young people to look at careers that encompass science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. He volunteers his time, as part of a small group, to ensure their success.

“It’s important to provide early guidance to younger children because otherwise we end up getting kids finishing high school who want to look at a career in engineering, science or aviation and they don’t have the correct subjects, which can hamstring their careers,” he said.

Since April last year, Operation Tangata Kanorau has engaged with more than 32,000 school children. The idea behind School to Skies was to build confidence in young women to consider science, engineering, or aviation career options.

A big reward for CPL Angelo was seeing the sense of accomplishment the students gained from the programmes.

Chief of Air Force Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Clark said CPL Angelo was an excellent ambassador and an outstanding role model who has personified the NZDF ethos and values to the highest standard.

“His work ethic and consistent commitment to go above and beyond is second to none. He sets a great standard as an airman.”
“People from different backgrounds, with different upbringings have different ways of processing a problem.”
**Innovation of the Year**

Developing a new process to maintain a de-icing system on NH90 helicopters, set to save hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, has earned Corporal (CPL) Jennifer Harmon the award for Innovation of the Year.

CPL Jennifer Harmon found that NH90 main rotor de-icing wiring harnesses were being discarded if a fault was identified, even if they could be successfully repaired. The harnesses were routinely inspected in the Rotary Bay in Maintenance Support Squadron at Ohakea. They were deemed a “non-repairable” item and if any faults were identified, the assembly was disposed of. Replacement parts could take months to arrive and with limited stock levels there was a potential to affect aircraft availability and capability.

CPL Harmon concluded there must be a better way for the Air Force to carry out this maintenance activity, which was causing regular rejection and disposal of this assembly. After disassembling one of the units, she discovered individual parts inside the harness were readily available for replacement. CPL Harmon then drafted a method to repair the unit showing it could be done while maintaining airworthiness considerations and requirements.

The innovation and proactive approach shown by CPL Harmon in developing the NH90 main rotor de-icing harness repair has significant benefit for the Air Force. Over the in-service life of the aircraft this repair will provide considerable financial savings which is expected to be up to $400,000 annually.

Officer in charge of Maintenance Support Squadron at Base Ohakea Squadron Leader Charanjit Singh said CPL Harmon was a forward thinking individual who identified a better way to manage main rotor de-icing harness rejection and disposal.

“With her pragmatic work approach she came out with a solution which not only provided cost savings but also increased the availability of the part. CPL Harmon is very thorough and diligent in all aspects of her work and consistently seeks ways to improve. Her outstanding technical merit and her dedication to maintain high technical standards makes her a model aircraft technician and a model airman.”
The ceremony took place in Base Auckland’s gym, in front of dignitaries including Her Royal Highness, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall and Chief of Air Force Air Vice-Marshal (AVM) Andrew Clark, as well as personnel and their families.

The event took place nearly 66 years after Queen Elizabeth presented the first Queen’s Colour, again at Base Auckland, on December 28, 1953.

During the ceremony Prince Charles, who is also the Marshal of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, said it gave him “immense pride and pleasure” to present the new Queen’s Colour on behalf of the Queen.

He congratulated the personnel who paraded on their professionalism, which reflected their outstanding conduct.

“Over the decades since the Queen first gave you her Colour, you have upheld your proud traditions of service and duty, whilst continuing to adapt and to rise to the challenges of an ever-changing world.

“Her Majesty has given you her Colour in the knowledge that you will guard it well and that it will always remind you of the trust placed in the Royal New Zealand Air Force by us all.

“For my part, I need hardly say how proud I am of all of you and just how much I value that bond with you today and for the future.”

AVM Clark said the presentation was an “historic and significant” occasion.

“Her Majesty’s Colour is an enduring symbol of inspiration to the Royal New Zealand Air Force, of pride to those who serve in its ranks and of remembrance of those who have sacrificed their lives in service to their country.”

The ceremonial Colour was replaced because after 15 years the current one has reached the end of its serviceable life. It will be presented to the Air Force Museum of New Zealand for display.

Recognition by the Sovereign of the achievements of the Air Force is signified by the award of the Queen’s Colour – a Colour is the highest honour which the Sovereign can bestow.

Whenever the Colour is moved from one place to another, it is to be taken only in an RNZAF aircraft or motor transport, is escorted by a commissioned officer or warrant officer and is to be handled with dignity. An officer, wearing a sword, is always to be placed in charge of the Colour, and an escort of two Senior Non-Commissioned Officers, armed with rifles, is to be provided when paraded.

BOTTOM LEFT: Queen Elizabeth II presenting the Queen’s Colour to the RNZAF in 1953.

Photo: Air Force Museum of New Zealand
This year we have maintained a hectic tempo. Operations and exercises at home and around the world, essential aid delivered to communities in the Pacific, rescues of people on board stricken vessels in the Pacific and lost trampers in our bush, and work with outside agencies, have kept the Air Force humming. Take a look at just some of the highlights from the year.
A Boeing B757 delivered essential aid to the Solomon Islands. It touched down carrying two tonnes of voting equipment, medical supplies for the Fred Hollows Foundation and more than a dozen boxes of aid for the Islands’ refuge that looks after survivors of domestic violence.

Warrant Officer (W/O) Kathleen Nikau became the Air Force’s new Māori Cultural Advisor – the first female to take on the role across the three Services. In a ceremony held at the Air Force’s Tūrangawaewae at Base Ohakea, W/O Nikau took over the role from W/O Patrick Smith.

The Air Force contributed more than 100 personnel to help fight the Nelson wildfires. The country’s worst forest fire in decades started in Tasman district’s Pigeon Valley on February 5. Flames spread quickly across 2,335 hectares, forcing the evacuation of 3,000 people from their homes.

Air Force personnel and NH90s were a major contributor to large international exercise in Australia, Talisman Sabre. The exercise provided an essential training opportunity to test our people, capabilities, skills and focus around combat scenarios, while working alongside some of our closest military partners.

The Government has announced the selection of the C-130J-30 Super Hercules as the preferred option for the replacement of the current C-130H aircraft. The replacement of the five Hercules transport aircraft is the highest priority project within the Coalition Government’s Defence Capability Plan 2019.

A Boeing 757 has transported 1.5 tonnes of donated goods destined for remote communities in Fiji. The goods were collected by Wellington-based non-profit organisation Empower NZ and comprised of clothing, educational resources, toys, linen and baby clothes.

About 9,500 cannabis plants were seized during a joint operation between the Air Force and New Zealand Police. The three-week operation, supported by a No. 3 Squadron NH90 helicopter, covered areas in the Tasman and Central Police Districts.
A routine fisheries patrol by a P-3K2 Orion aircraft turned into a major rescue of 18 fishing vessel crew in the Pacific Ocean. The P-3 had been completing fishery patrols about 400 nautical miles west of Tuvalu when, by chance, crew spotted a Chinese fishing vessel that had been seriously damaged by fire just the day before.

A P-3K2 Orion and crew deployed to support international efforts to monitor United Nations Security Council (UNSC) imposed sanctions against North Korea. During the deployment the crew would look to detect evasions of sanctions, such as illicit ship-to-ship transfers of sanctioned goods.

A load of near new wheelchairs were delivered by a C-130 Hercules to a charity organisation in Tonga. The chairs will change the lives for the people who need them, Rotary New Zealand says. The eight wheelchairs, gifted by a donor, will be provided to disabled people in Tonga.

Battling strong winds and dealing with low cloud in the Tararua Ranges, an NH90 and its crew rescued two stricken trampers, with one bordering on hypothermia. The Canadian man and New Zealand woman were flown to Palmerston North airport, where they were transferred to hospital.

Air Force personnel joined in the effort to clean up an environmental disaster on the West Coast after heavy flooding washed 5,500 tonnes of rubbish from a disused landfill across 1,620ha of coastland and riverbeds. Personnel worked on the ground and air support from A109 helicopters and a Boeing 757 were provided to the massive operation.

A C-130 Hercules dropped 3.1 tonnes of food, mail and equipment to support the work of government agencies on Raoul Island. The aircraft dropped supplies to support operations of the Department of Conservation (DOC), MetService and GNS Science on the remote island, which is 1,100km north north-east of the North Island.

Two Seasprite helicopters, an Air Force Unimog and personnel delivered 50 tonnes of crushed oyster shells to a remote breeding site of the critically endangered native bird, tara iti/New Zealand fairy tern. The shells were used to create safer nesting sites for tara iti at Papakanui Spit, at the mouth of Kaipara Harbour.
Getting the message across

**RNZAF Recruitment Poster**

*Year: 1941*

Before the age of internet pop-up adverts or widespread television use, posters in public places were an effective way of influencing people. During World War II, Air Force recruiters used posters to persuade people to join the service. This rare survivor was produced in early 1941 when there was a high demand for personnel to join up and serve overseas. The mood of the poster emphasises the glamour of flight and the masculinity associated with military pilots in popular culture at the time. The dashing pilot portrayed in the poster perhaps resembles some contemporary Hollywood stars, but was in fact a self-portrait of the commercial artist responsible, Claude Wade.

*From the collection of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand*
Encouraging people to join the military has always involved creative marketing ideas. However, the subject matter and method of getting the message out has changed considerably over the years.

Methods of recruiting have developed vastly over the past eight decades. Now our advertising appears on the internet, television, backs of buses and sometimes on the back page of Air Force News. We hope to attract people from all walks of life who have skills in logistics, communications, engineering, firefighting, medicine and all things aviation. The more diverse a workforce, the stronger our organisation is. Our recruiting ads also illustrate the modern equipment that our personnel use during their careers and also the opportunities for travel around the country and across the world.

Be part of the New Zealand Defence Force
There’s over 109 roles available including IT, communications, engineering, logistics, aviation, medicine, and emergency response. Some roles require a degree and some don’t. We also have university and graduate scholarships available.

defencecareers.mil.nz
0800 1FORCE
Woodbourne’s new Base Commander

Delivering world class and contemporary training will be the focus for the new Base Commander at Base Woodbourne.

“I really look forward to being part of the dedicated team who train and develop our future leaders.”

Wing Commander (WGCDR) Peter De Rungs was formally welcomed as Base Commander Woodbourne recently and said he was both excited and privileged.

“I am excited at the prospect of being part of a team that welcomes and trains our future ground trade specialists and the future leaders of our Air Force.

“My focus will be to be a visible Base Commander and one who is approachable as well as ensuring that we deliver the best training we can, and above all have fun in everything we do,” he said.

WGCDR De Rungs is looking forward to the interaction with a wider cross-section of Air Force personnel, from recruits and cadets to those on promotion courses.

He joined the Air Force in 1990 as an Aircraft Mechanic before Basic Engineering. From there he worked on group servicing for the C-130 Hercules and P-3K2 Orion as well as other technical positions.

He joined the Air Force in 1990 as an Aircraft Mechanic before Basic Engineering. From there he worked on group servicing for the C-130 Hercules and P-3K2 Orion as well as other technical positions.

After commissioning from the ranks in 2005 he held a number of engineering positions including a deployment to Afghanistan with No. 40 Squadron. WGCDR De Rungs took study leave in 2017 to complete a full immersion Te Reo Māori course at Te Wānanga Takiura.

Since joining, WGCDR De Rungs said the Air Force had become a lot more culturally inclusive.

“We treat each other on a more personal level these days, and I believe that we have become more culturally aware. Especially since the opening of Tūrangawaewae and the inclusion of cultural training on our promotion courses,” he said.

Among the number of challenges the Air Force faced at the moment will be the implementation of the training elements of the new Defence Aviation Rules, he said.

“This will require a change in the focus of our technical trade training – this is an area where I would like us to explore contemporary training methods.

“Our people, especially younger people, are adaptable and innovative. They have grown up around technology in an ever-changing world, so I know they’re up for the challenge,” WGCDR De Rungs said.

Base Woodbourne’s primary function is training the Air Force’s newest officers and airmen, and providing training up to advanced and post-graduate level.
Forum Brings Unique Opportunities

Recently two of our airmen travelled to 17th Wing, Winnipeg, Canada for the Junior Enlisted Leadership Forum.

This is an annual leadership activity for Corporals and Sergeants co-hosted by the United States Air Force. Junior leaders from across the Indo-Asia-Pacific regions come together to share ideas and learn from each other.

For Corporal Kim Gilbert, our current Airman of the Year, this event was the finale in what has been an impressive year of activities for her:

“And that’s a wrap, what a year!! I am reflecting now after recently returning from Canada for the Junior Enlisted Leaders Forum. This was the opportunity of a lifetime to interact with people from eight different nations and add to my toolbox of skills as a junior leader. We got the chance to learn from a range of Senior Enlisted Leaders about their journeys, struggles and triumphs as well as becoming more aware of our own biases and how this impacts what we do.”

Corporal Gilbert said the year has been busy but rewarding.

“I have spent Anzac Day on the Gallipoli Peninsula, spent time with students at the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying Camp in Matamata, observed Air Cadets at their Annual Air Skills competition in Woodbourne and interacted with future recruits.

“It’s been an amazing year of networking and new experiences and feel fortunate that I have had the chance to take advantage of it.”

Sergeant Bruce Sandbrook also attended the Junior Enlisted Leadership Forum and learned a lot from the experience:

“For me it was a unique opportunity to network and learn with other leaders at my level from Air Forces around the Indo-Asia-Pacific. We covered many topics, ranging from ethics in leadership to resiliency and the complexity of the global geopolitical environment.

“This event challenged my preconceptions, expanded my perceptions, and changed my perspective. Kiwis are humble, and we often downplay our place in the world – but New Zealand is not as small and insignificant as you may think. We are a resilient and resourceful bunch and we each as individuals and together as a nation bring a unique and valuable perspective to peace, conflict, and resolution.

“The most enjoyable aspect of the forum was the people. We shared our experiences and debated difficult topics. We talked about how to make good decisions in challenging situations. We forged friendships, strengthened connections and left with a firmer sense of unity.

“People are our most important resource, and leveraging each other’s unique abilities and differences can help us to create powerful effects. As iron sharpens iron, we make each other stronger; and I know each of us left with a keener edge.”
Security Forces personnel dress in patrol order kit for combat, including body armour, helmet, rifle, pistol and first line ammunition. Specific tasks require more specialised equipment including a Night Vision Monocular.

Set to Protect

Security Forces personnel help protect personnel and equipment as well as providing force protection measures against a range of threats. To do that effectively, the team has to be kitted out with a range of specialist equipment. One of the team gives us a glimpse of their impressive gear.
14.5” MARS-L rifle
Fitted with a magazine, an Advanced Combat Optical Gun Sight and PEQ-15 – a laser pointer for a weapon

Molle Vest Webbing
Used when on exercises. The pouches can be changed to any configuration depending on the kit required for the task

Mini NSEAS Night Vision Monocular and helmet
Used for head protection and night vision work

Night Vision Monocular
Uses a helmet mounting kit to attach

CCA Body Armour
The Level IIIA soft ballistic inserts found in the collar and carrier provide protection against all handguns up to .44 Magnum and 9 mm submachine guns and shotgun pellets

Molle Battle belt
Fitted with essential equipment including weapons and first aid
Over the past nine months, eight Air Force firefighters have spent hundreds of hours working under the close direction of the Air Force Personal Training Instructors to prepare themselves physically and mentally for the annual competition that is labelled as the ‘Toughest Two Minutes in Sports’.

After big successes at the New Zealand Regional and National Competitions earlier this year, the Combat Challenge Team set their sights on a much larger goal – to represent at the World Competition. With the support of the Air Force, they were able to make this a reality.

The six-day event saw hundreds of competitors travelling from Europe, Australasia, Canada and all across America to participate in the challenge and compete for the title of World Champion.

The course consisted of five main tasks that tested both the strength and aerobic capabilities of any functionally fit firefighter.

While wearing full firefighting gear and breathing apparatus, competitors were required to perform a five-storey tower climb, as well as “hoisting, chopping, dragging hoses and rescuing a life-sized 80kg ‘victim’ as they raced against themselves, their opponent and the clock”.

Various categories allowed participants to complete this course individually, in pairs as a ‘tandem race’ or in teams of up to five in a ‘relay’. The Air Force team participated in all three events, coming away with some outstanding times and new personal records for everyone on the team.

Huge congratulations to two of the team competitors – Aircraftman (AC) Bailey Campbell and Aircraftman Isabel Whitaker who both achieved ‘Lion’s Den’ times at the event! The ‘Lion’s Den’ award is presented to individuals who complete the course in under an allocated timeframe comparative to their age and gender and is recognised as the challenge ‘hall of fame’.

AC Campbell achieved a personal record of 1.39min earning his first ‘Lion’s Den’ run; while AC Whitaker achieved a 2.54min, scraping 4 seconds off her original ‘Lion’s Den’ time of 2.58min which she achieved at the New Zealand Nationals competition earlier this year.

Combat Challenge Veteran, Sergeant (SGT) Hayden Kinzett, also set a personal and New Zealand Record at the competition, running a 1.26min in the individual category.

The Royal New Zealand Air Force Firefighter Combat Challenge Team made its mark on the world stage in Montgomery, Alabama, USA recently at the 3M Scott Firefighter Combat Challenge, World Challenge XXVIII.
Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Lottie Dalton-Harvey and Isabel Whitaker participated in an international relay hybrid team that came fourth in the female relay category and the Air Force male relay team made it to the quarter finals in the male relay category.

The Air Force team ended up placing eighth overall in the teams’ combined individual times.

Physical Training Instructor Corporal (CPL) Luke Cowie also ran the course for the first time with a respectable 2:08min.

While incredibly proud of their achievements in America, the Air Force team would like to extend a huge thanks to everyone who made this opportunity possible – Commanding Officer Operations Squadron Ivan Green, the Base Auckland Fire Station and Fire Master Phil Webley, Personal Training Instructors Luke Cowie and Marcus Speck, as well as to our friends, family and colleagues in and around the Air Force community who supported us.

“I can see now why they call this the toughest two minutes in sports! Huge props to all the competitors who run the course; this sport takes functional fitness to the next level.”

- Corporal Luke Cowie
The purpose of the trip was to visit the United States Air Force’s (USAF) 36th Airlift Squadron to gain first-hand knowledge of the lessons learned during their recent transition from the C-130H to the C-130J-30 super Hercules.

In 2017, the 36th Airlift Squadron was the last active duty squadron in the USAF to retire the C-130H Hercules aircraft and introduce the super Hercules. It currently operates 14 aircraft and forms part of the 374th Operations Group providing responsive movement of personnel and equipment through aerial delivery and assault airland operations.

The unit maintains mission ready aircrew and aircraft available to conduct theatre airlift, special operations, aeromedical evacuation, search and rescue, repatriation and humanitarian relief missions.

As part of the visit we were shown through an aircraft rigged for a typical Aeromedical Evacuation (AE). We were briefed on those capabilities by Wing Commander Elicia McGinniss, an Australian Flight Surgeon who is on exchange with the USAF.

One of the highlights of the visit was the opportunity to fly on a tactical mission with the USAF and observe the crew interaction and the end-to-end mission planning unique to 36 Squadron operations.

The flight was a three ship formation training mission. The first part of the flight took us to the west of Yokota past Mt Fuji and then back to Yokota for an airdrop on the airfield. This was followed by a route to the south flying around the Izu peninsula before landing back at Yokota. The weather for the flight was great and the scenery was outstanding.

A tour was also made to the 374th Maintenance Group which provides maintenance support at Yokota for the C-130J-30 aircraft fleet. The team observed one of the aircraft on a “C” check, which takes about 4,000 man hours to complete.

The maintenance squadron is structured so that a “C” check can be completed in about 10 – 14 working days. This is achieved using a two shift system with each shift having between 30 and 35 personnel all working on the aircraft. The two things that struck the team during the maintenance visit was the tempo of the work being undertaken and sense of pride that the maintainers had working on the aircraft.

The visit was well worthwhile and the FAMC team were well received by the USAF personnel. Valuable information was provided to assist the RNZAF to be able to introduce the new C-130J-30 aircraft smoothly and seamlessly when they are received in a few years’ time.
Chaplain says “Goodbye and thanks”

I’ve met countless fantastic people, had many awesome opportunities and been trained, stretched and developed to my benefit in countless ways.

I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute in the Defence Force and will miss the people terribly. There are too many people to mention and thank, but I will name just three who got me off to the very best possible start. Thank you to Padre Jack (Wright) the Officiating Chaplain at Ohakea who trained me so well, Wing Commander Rod Fortune, my first base Commander and Wing Commander Jackie Ward, my first Base Adjutant, both of whom supported me as I settled in to my role.

Jenny and I will be moving to a few acres we own just north of Cambridge. We will attempt to turn it in to a fairly self-sustaining lifestyle block. There is a cuppa for any and all of you there any time!

I finish by asking the Air Force News to reprint part of an article I wrote back in 2008. Here you go.

“Can I invite you to forget about the Air Force for a while?”

Recently, I was privileged enough to receive an invitation to attend the annual “Air Force Leadership Forum”......

CAF summed it all up in his closing address when he said, “The one we’ve all got to keep working on is the people one”. I think what he was saying was, we’ll either succeed or fail on our people. So what does all this talk about people mean? I think that it is an acknowledgement that you can have all the best ideas in the world and all the best gear in the world, but at the end of the day, it will always be people that use that gear and implement that plan. And if the people aren’t up to speed or aren’t happy then it doesn’t matter one bit how flash the toys are, “that boat just ain’t going to float.”

Now here is a very good saying, and one that I have adapted slightly for our situation; “Don’t try to build a big Air Force. Build big people and big people will build a big Air Force.”

What is a “big person”?

• A big person is someone who is comfortable enough with themselves (self security) and comfortable enough in their job (content and capable) to be a self starter.

• A big person knows how to “let the problem be the problem” rather than getting into personalities and pettiness.

• A big person doesn’t get overly defensive when their competence is questioned. They hear the challenge and work on the skills all the while holding their dignity and values.

• Big people don’t insist on getting the credit or fish for compliments.

So can I invite every one of you to forget about building a big Air Force for a while, and concentrate on building big people?
Deployed Personnel Fundraise for Wonderboy Elijah North

Prior to deployment Major (MAJ) John Humphries had read articles in the Army News pertaining to fundraising for Elijah North (aka Wonderboy), to assist with the medical expenses related to his condition. So he approached the little boy’s parents, both serving in the Army, Captain Tane North and Captain Laura North to see if he and the team could assist with fundraising. Elijah was born with Microcephaly, which means he has a small head due to abnormal brain development, which causes severe Global Developmental Delay. He also has an undiagnosed genetic condition which affects most of his body. At four years old, Elijah does not walk and has only recently begun to crawl, he does not talk, is legally blind, and is tube fed. Elijah weighs only 10kg and has 14 health issues in total, including heart and bowel complications.

To provide the best possible therapy for Elijah, he requires regular treatment in Sydney at a cost of $14,000 per three week session.

As a further family twist, with two elder siblings perfectly healthy, his sister was recently born with Down syndrome. A plan was launched on how we could raise money for the family from across the other side of the world. We first came up with a donation tin for members of the Defence Force to contribute to as they passed through the base. While this had some success it wasn’t enough.

We came up with a fundraising activity on a grander scale and put together a triathlon. Participants had to row for 5km on a rowing machine in lieu of swimming, 15km ride on an exercycle, and finishing off with a 5km run on a treadmill. All activities were carried out inside to avoid the 40 ° +heat.

Once word got around via posters, a veritable bombardment of emails, and word of mouth prompting to our coalition partners, a number of teams entered. Wing Commander Greg Josephs gave the opening address and he and Warrant Officer Chris Wilson oversaw the activity.

Teams entered from New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom along with one lunatic individual entry (MAJ Humphries, who completed the whole triathlon and was well into his second before the last team finished). Other coalition Nations who were unable to participate due to their respective activities on the day arranged their own fundraising activities and passed on their donations. Between the donation tin and the Triathlon, we raised almost $5,400 for Wonderboy.

A couple of the British Royal Air Force personnel, who were qualified hairdressers, conducted a 24-hour haircut-a-thon and raised nearly $1,500 for Wonderboy and this is a great example of the bonds and friendship that can be made when deployed overseas.

The deployed team’s thoughts are with the North family as they continue their journey to provide the best therapy possible for Elijah North and trust the NZ$6,858.11 raised across the fundraising activities provides some support to Elijah’s medical expenses.
Making Water out of Thin Air

A system that makes drinking water out of air earned former aircraft technician and now Defence civilian Gill McFarlane third place in the Army Innovation Challenge.

Mrs McFarlane chanced upon the idea when she was on maternity leave, and her baby son wasn’t in the mood for sleeping.

“I was up in the middle of the night, and I started researching green and sustainable technology that I could use if I had a bach. I started looking at different ways of supplying water when water wouldn’t be readily available and came across Skywater 300 which is an air-to-water technology that converts atmospheric water vapour into liquid water via condensation.

When she worked with No. 40 Squadron Mrs McFarlane said it was common for the Air Force to deploy to the Pacific Islands when potable water there ran out.

“I thought, wouldn’t it be great to take this system to use it to make drinking water until the desalination plant the military uses started producing? We could bring the system in and create water immediately for whoever needed it.”

The system was reinforced with a protective exoskeleton, and shock-absorbing gaskets and support structures. It is in use by the United States Army, the Italian Armed Service, the Indian Army, and the Venezuelan Army.

The advantages of the atmospheric water generator over a desalination plant included there being no waste product to dispose of, and it being able to be monitored remotely, Mrs McFarlane said. One unit can provide drinking water for 250 people per day.

“Atmospheric water vapour is an unlimited resource that is constantly replaced by nature. The Skywater 300 draws air in through vents, and passes it over a condenser, where it is converted into a liquid by Skywater’s patented distillation process.”

SUSTAINMENT IS THE LONG HAUL!

Sustainment

The speed and reach of air power can sustain an effect over a long period of time or distance, supporting others and improving sustainability of the whole force.

Air Power in Action
The event included dependants, who had a chance to join the action, which provided them an opportunity to meet other Air Force kids who share the same interest.

Former aviation refueller, Sergeant James Opie kindly offered the use of his farm, located between Te Kuiti and Taumarunui, with the only condition being that he and his family got to join in.

The first day saw all riders undertake the natural terrain motocross track. For many this was the very first time they had raced and taking them outside of their usual comfort zone. Overnight rain didn’t help, making track conditions very muddy and slippery.

The competitors were split into four classes to race three races consisting of five laps of the undulating track:
- MX1 for Experienced Riders
- MX2 for Novice Riders
- Vets for the older Novice Riders
- Youth for Kids under 14

The following day saw the participants split into three person teams to participate in the Cross Country relay discipline. This involved each team member completing a lap of a long distance track that covered open farm land, graded tracks, steep hill climbs and rough terrain. This was once again outside of many riders’ comfort zone and presented a lot of different challenges to the riding they had completed the day before.

In the spirit of Inter-base rivalry 12 Base Auckland riders were matched against the 12 Ohakea riders to compete for the unofficial Inter-base trophy and take bragging rights of the top base in the cross country event.

Once again the weather played its part making the trail muddy and slippery however this did not deter riders from competing fearlessly against their comrades. Base Auckland were eventual winners getting their 12 person team across the line first.
Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Charlotte Flanagan has taken the Outstanding Sports Achievement of the Year at the 2019 NZDF Sports Awards for her fullbore target shooting achievements, which involves a .308 calibre rifle with open sights, at the 2019 World Long Range Championships held at Trentham.

She captained the New Zealand under-25 team, which placed third in that section and was a member of the NZ Open team that finished fifth overall. Individually she was the top shooter in the NZ under-25 team and third in the under-25 years 800 range.

She said she was happy to be nominated for the award and surprised to win – but thought many of her colleagues would be even more surprised.

“People in the workplace don’t really know that I do shooting – what I get up to most weekends or why I’m away quite a lot.”

LAC Flanagan was joined on the podium by Air Force colleague Aircraftman (AC) Sam Smith, who was named Emerging Sports Person of the Year for her softball and netball skills.

AC Smith won selection for the ANZAC softball team, which combined the top NZDF and Australian Defence Force players, to compete against a Brisbane selection team. She was the only Kiwi to play the entire game, and her two runs were the only ones scored for the ANZAC team.

AC Smith played in premier and reserve grade teams for the Waitakere Bears Softball Club and competed with the club at Nationals. She also played at Inter-Base and Inter-Service level for the Air Force, and was named rookie of both tournaments.

On top of her softball achievements, AC Smith played Inter-Base and Inter-Service netball for the Air Force, and during the latter played every minute at centre – a position she had never played before.

She said she aimed to be an advocate for sport in general, not just her sport.

“I’m just such a big believer in bringing what people need to enable them to be able to play to their full potential.”

NZDF civilian Michael Gray was named Sports Coach of the Year, for his work with netball.

He coached the undefeated Wellington Air Force mixed netball team to victory in the Inter-Base netball tournament and the Air Force mixed team to runners-up in the Inter-Service tournament. He was also NZDF mixed netball head coach, coaches Paraparaumu College netball, is a qualified umpire and a Netball Kapiti umpire coach and mentor.

Mr Gray paid tribute to his players and his management team, and said it had been a 12-year push to get mixed netball recognised as an official NZDF sport.

“So it’s been really great to see from where it started to where it is now, where the players are and how strong netball is within the NZDF.”

AWARDS & WINNERS:

- Individual Sports Person of the Year
  Able Seaman Sheridan Wills, Netball

- Sports Official of the Year
  WO2 Lawrence Colvin, Touch

- Sports Coach of the Year
  Mr Mike Gray, Netball

- Team of the Year
  NZDF Women’s Rugby Team

- Emerging Sports Person of the Year
  AC Samantha Smith, Softball

- Outstanding Sports Achievement of the Year
  LAC Charlotte Flanagan, Shooting

- Sports Committee Nomination for Person of the Year
  LSTD Deena-ranginui Puketapu

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
AC Sam Smith, Michael Gray, LAC Charlotte Flanagan
1. How many US aircraft carriers operated from Yankee Station during the Vietnam War: 5, 9, or 14?

2. What was Yankee Station?

3. How many countries are part of the NATO alliance: 19, 29, or 39?

4. What is the purpose of ailerons on an aircraft?

5. What is meant by fighter sweep?

6. What is a FRAGO?

7. Name two NZ Government departments that make use of the NH90 helicopter.

8. What is the English translation of the RNZAF motto: Per Ardua Ad Astra?

9. Operation Steel Tiger was conducted as part of the air campaign during the Vietnam War. What was its purpose?

10. What is a Lagrange Point?

11. What is close air support?

12. How many nuclear weapons have been tested since 1945: approx. 500, 1000, 1500, or 2000?

13. Russian satellites Cosmos 248, 249, and 252 were used to test what system?

14. Russian crew members flew aboard RNZAF C-130’s on flights to Moscow during 1973. True or false?

15. What is the role of an aggressor squadron?

16. Was the A-10 Warthog flown in Vietnam?

17. What was the role of the Grumman OV-1 Mohawk?

18. Is the MI-8 Hip a light, medium, or heavy lift helicopter?

19. An indigenous fighter aircraft was designed and built by Taiwan. True or false?

20. Westland Lynx helicopters are designed for the land domain, or sea domain, or both?

21. The Boeing E-3 Sentry is based on what airframe?

22. What was the role of the Grumman EA-6B Prowler?

23. No. 14 Squadron RNZAF was based in Cyprus during 1952-55 as part of what force?

24. What aircraft did No. 14 Squadron fly while in Cyprus?
How many Catalina aircraft did the RNZAF operate from 1943 to 1953: 46, 56, or 66?

Name three Lockheed aircraft operated by the RNZAF.

Operation Unified Protector was undertaken in Libya during 2011. What UN document formed the legal basis for the operation?

Two elements of Operation Unified Protector included an arms embargo, and enforcing a no-fly zone. What was the third element?

Sixteen countries participated in air operations over Libya during 2011. Name five of them.

Which RNZAF squadron flew the DC-6?

\[\text{ANSWERS}\]
Up until this point in the change of command parade I felt like I hadn’t yet captured an image that really conveyed the spirit of the surprisingly moving ceremony. When Wing Commander Peter De Rungs began his haka, the force of his movement ripped a button from his jacket, and the audience and parade was so dead quiet you could hear it hit the concrete. I knew that this image of the strength of the new Base Commander’s haka in front of the residents of RNZAF Base Woodbourne would convey the mana he brings to his new role.
ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE CREED

I belong to the Royal New Zealand Air Force
I am committed to our mission and values
I honour our legacy and embrace our future
I have the courage to stand for what is right
I serve the people of New Zealand in peace, crisis and conflict
I am a guardian of Aotearoa
Ko te Tauaarangi ahau

I am an Airman

“Thank you for your input to our new Air Force Creed. More information to follow in 2020...”
– Air Vice-Marshall Andrew Clark, Chief of Air Force