

NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES

REPORT OF THE COMMODORE COMMANDING THE NEW ZEALAND STATION, FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 1924 TO 31st MARCH 1925

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency the
Governor-General*

REPORT

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

H.M.S. "Dunedin", 16th May, 1925

SIR –

I have the honour to submit the following annual report in regard to the Naval Forces of the Dominion, covering the period 1st April, 1924, to 31st March, 1925.

I. PROCEEDINGS OF H.M.S. "CHATHAM."

1. On the 1st April, 1924, H.M.S. "Chatham" was at Auckland, whence she proceeded to Wellington in order to be present for the visit of the battle-cruisers "Hood" and "Repulse," and H.M.A.S. "Adelaide." She sailed for Auckland on the 7th May, and was present at that port during the visit of the Special Service Squadron.

2. On the 10th May, H.M.S. "Chatham" ceased duty as flagship of the New Zealand Division, and was replaced by H.M.S. "Dunedin." The transfer of ratings and stores between the two ships took several days to complete, and on the 27th May H.M.S. "Chatham" sailed from Auckland for the East Indies Station, calling at Noumea, Thursday Island, Batavia, and Singapore. On arrival at Colombo, H.M.S. "Chatham" became flagship of the East Indies Squadron, relieving H.M.S. "Southampton," which proceeded to England.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF H.M.S. "DUNEDIN."

3. On becoming flagship of the New Zealand Division, H.M.S. "Dunedin" was docked and refitted at Auckland after her long voyage from England, and sailed on the 16th June for the annual visit to the islands of the South Pacific, which are included in the New Zealand Station. The places visited were Raoul, Nukualofa, Vavau, Apia, Pago Pago, Rarotonga, Niue, Suva, Levuka, and Lautoka. The new flagship of the New Zealand Division was most hospitably received at all places, and was viewed by large numbers of Natives at the ports visited. The cruise was of much benefit, and every opportunity was taken of carrying out drills, gunnery, and torpedo exercises.

4. On departure from Fiji, H.M.S. "Dunedin" proceeded on a visit to Australian ports, arriving at Jervis Bay on the 9th September, 1924. Various exercises were carried out with H.M.A. ships, which were of mutual benefit. Subsequently H.M.S. "Dunedin" visited Sydney, Melbourne, and Hobart, returning to Lyttelton on the 3rd November. The greatest kindness and courtesy was extended to the flagship of the New Zealand Division at the various ports visited. I am convinced of the value of an Annual exchange of visits between H.M.A. ships and that of the New Zealand Division ; such visits promote an interchange of ideas, and enable combined exercises to be carried out which are highly beneficial to the attainment of efficiency.

5. Whilst at Melbourne opportunity was taken to hold informal discussions on naval subjects with the members of the Commonwealth Naval Board; and at Sydney, Jervis Bay, and Melbourne I was courteously invited to inspect the training establishments of the Royal Australian Navy.

6. H.M.S. "Dunedin" carried out the annual musketry course at Wellington during the latter part of November up to the middle of December. I am greatly indebted to the General Officer Commanding and to the military authorities for their courtesy in permitting H.M. Navy to use

Trentham Camp and rifle ranges, and for the kindness which is always shown to officers and men during their stay. The course is highly beneficial, and is greatly appreciated by all concerned.

7. On Wednesday, 26th November, on the departure of Lord Jellicoe from New Zealand, H.M.S. "Dunedin" and "Veronica" proceeded to sea to pay naval honours to His Excellency by firing a final salute to his flag in Cook Strait. On this important occasion I was honoured by the presence of His Majesty's Ministers in New Zealand, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the General Officer Commanding, as my guests on board H.M.S. "Dunedin"; and it afforded me great pleasure that they should have been able to witness the naval ceremony, and at the same time to inspect the new flagship. By a fortunate coincidence the first batch of New Zealand ratings returned to Wellington from their training in England on the day of Lord Jellicoe's departure, and at his special request proceeded to Government House for his inspection. His Excellency warmly congratulated the men on the high standard attained by them during their courses, and also upon the excellent reports he had received of their conduct and morale from the officers who were responsible for their training in England.

8. H.M.S. "Dunedin" proceeded to Auckland towards the latter end of December to give Christmas leave and refit.

9. On the 22nd January, 1925, the command of H.M.S. "Dunedin" was transferred temporarily to Commander the Hon. Guy Stopford, Royal Navy, during my absence from the Dominion on a visit to Singapore. After carrying out drills and exercises in the Hauraki Gulf, the ship proceeded on a prolonged cruise round New Zealand ports, visiting Russell, Port Fitzroy, Tauranga, Auckland, Napier, Wellington, Picton, Nelson, Wanganui, New Plymouth, Westport, Greymouth, Milford Sound, Bluff, Oban, Patterson's Inlet, Oamaru, Timaru, Akaroa, and Dunedin. The ship was thrown open to visitors on every possible occasion, but it was most unfortunate that owing to the incidence of the epidemic of infantile paralysis it was not possible for those under sixteen years of age to have an opportunity of inspecting the ship. The greatest kindness and hospitality was shown to both officers and men, and I desire to express my warmest thanks to the Mayors and citizens of the various ports visited, and to the branches of the Navy League, for all their hospitality and arrangements so kindly made by them for the entertainment of the officers and ship's company. My broad pendant was rehoisted on board the flagship at Dunedin on the 16th April on my return to the Dominion from official duty.

III. H.M.S. "DIOMEDE."

10. In January, 1925, a definite offer was made by the Imperial Government of the loan of the cruiser "Diomedé" as the second cruiser of the New Zealand Division. The offer was accepted by the Government, and it is expected that this ship will be commissioned about the 1st October, 1925, and will reach the Dominion at the end of the year. H.M.S. "Diomedé" is one of the latest types of cruiser built, and has completed one commission on the China Station; she is very similar to H.M.S. "Dunedin." The addition of this vessel to the New Zealand Division will, in my opinion, be of great advantage, as, in addition to strengthening the naval forces of the station, the advent of a second cruiser will be invaluable in increasing efficiency by promoting competition between two vessels of this class. I understand that H.M.S. "Diomedé" will be commanded by Captain J. S. M. Ritchie, Royal Navy, who is a native of this Dominion.

IV. H.M.S. "PHILOMEL."

11. H.M.S. "Philomel" has continued her duties as training-ship and depot-ship at Auckland.

12. The removal of the machinery and boilers of this ship has been commenced during the past year, but, as this work is only undertaken when ratings are not required for more urgent duty, will take some time to complete. It is proposed to connect the ship to the shore lighting system at Devonport, as by this means considerable economy will be effected.

13. The training of recruits continues to be carried out in a most satisfactory manner, and meets with my entire approval.

V. BASE AT AUCKLAND.

14. The first tank for the storage of oil fuel is now complete; a second has been ordered, and the material should soon be in the Dominion, together with the pumping-machinery, &c. It is hoped that the whole installation will be completed before the end of the financial year 1925-26.

15. A storehouse for a ready-use stock of naval and victualling stores has been erected at Devonport, and it is proposed to fill this during the present financial year. It is anticipated that this storehouse will result in a considerable economy.

16. It is proposed to extend the present berthing accommodation at Devonport, in order to provide more space for ships to lie alongside when refitting. With the advent of the cruiser "Diomede" and oiler "Nucula," this step has become essential, in order to avoid delay and consequent expense engendered by transporting men and material for making-good defects between the ships and the workshops on shore.

VI. 'H.M. SLOOPS "LABURNUM" AND "VERONICA."

17. These two vessels have continued their duties of visiting the islands in the South, Pacific and ports in New Zealand.

18. H.M.S. "Veronica" visited the following islands during the winter: Fiji, Ocean Island, Gilbert and Ellice Group, Rotumah, Lau Group, and Tonga. During the year the following ports in New Zealand were visited: Wellington, Wanganui, New Plymouth, Nelson, Whangaroa, Russell, Port Underwood, Napier, Dunedin, Bluff, Oamaru, Timaru, Lyttelton, Auckland. Commander Philip Hordern took over the command of H.M.S. "Veronica" in September, 1924, from Commander V. B. Cardwell, who returned to England. This ship was recommissioned on the 1st May, 1924.

19. H.M.S. "Laburnum" visited the following islands during the winter: Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands, Murea, Tahiti, Niue, Keppel Island, Tonga. During the year the following ports in New Zealand were visited: Waikeke Island, Gisborne, Napier, Timaru, Akaroa, Lyttelton, Whangarei, Kawau, New Plymouth, Wellington, Wanganui, Milford Sound, Westport, Picton, Auckland.

VII. R.F.A. "NUCULA."

20. The oil-tank vessel "Nucula" was transferred from the Imperial to the New Zealand Government on the 27th May, 1924, at Suva, Fiji, after having completed with fuel certain ships of the Special Service Squadron. This vessel has been lent by the Admiralty to the New Zealand Government, as it is impossible for a squadron of oil-burning vessels to be completed with fuel at ports on the station at which H.M.S. "Chatham" formerly obtained coal.

21. As the "Nucula" was previously attached to the China Station, and in consequence carried a Chinese crew, certain alterations to accommodation were required to render her suitable for a New Zealand mercantile crew. These have now been completed. The ship was docked and refitted during March, 1925, and is ready to perform her duties on the station.

VIII. SPECIAL SERVICE SQUADRON.

22. The Special Service Squadron, consisting of H.M. ships "Hood," battle-cruiser, 41,200 tons; "Repulse," battle-cruiser, 26,500 tons; "Delhi," cruiser, 4,650 tons; "Dragon," cruiser, 4,650 tons; "Dauntless," cruiser, 4,650 tons; "Danae," cruiser, 4,650 tons; "Dunedin," cruiser, 4,650 tons, and H.M.A.S. "Adelaide," 5,560 tons, arrived in the Dominion on the 24th April, 1924. The squadron was commanded by Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Field, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., and the cruisers were under the command of Rear-Admiral the Hon. Sir Hubert Brand, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., C.B. The battle-cruisers first visited Wellington and then proceeded to Auckland, where they were joined by the cruisers, which had previously visited Lyttelton, Dunedin, and the Bluff. During the passage to Auckland the vessels of the squadron stopped for a few hours on the 9th May off Napier and Gisborne. The whole Special Service Squadron sailed on the 18th May to continue its cruise, which lasted until September, 1924.

23. During his visit to New Zealand, Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Field took the greatest interest in the organization and training of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy. He was good enough to inspect the ship's company of H.M.S. "Chatham" at Wellington; and also the New Zealand ratings under training, H.M.S. "Philomel," and the Naval Base at Devonport, during his visit to Auckland.

IX. RECRUITING FOR THE SEAGOING FORCES.

24. The following table shows the numbers finally entered during the period 1st April, 1924, to 31st March, 1925 :—

Regimental District	Ordinary Seamen and Boys.	Stokers.	Artificers and Artisans.	Cooks and Stewards.	Other Ratings.	Total.
Auckland	10	..	..	..	1	11
Paeroa	2	..	..	..	..	2
Whangarei	2	..	..	..	..	.2
Hamilton	1	..	..	..	..	1
Wellington	5	..	..	..	..	5
Palmerston North	10	2	1	..	..	13
Napier	3	..	..	..	..	3
Hawera	4	..	..	..	..	4
Nelson	5	..	..	..	..	5
Christchurch	7	..	..	..	..	7
Dunedin	6	..	..	1	..	7
Invercargill	.2	..	..	..	..	2
Totals	57	2	1	1	1	62

25. The following table shows the numbers discharged or dismissed during the period 1st April, 1924, to 31st March, 1925, after final entry :—

Cause.	Able Seamen, Ordinary Seamen, and Boys.	Stokers.	Other Ratings.	Total.
Services no longer required, unsuitable, dismissed as a punishment-	6	..	..	6
Desertion.	7	6	..	13
Invalided	3	2	..	5
By purchase	2	2	2	6
Totals	18	10	2	30

26. Recruiting during the past financial year resulted in obtaining approximately the number of boys required, but the call for a small number of stokers has not so far met with a satisfactory response.

27. It is hoped that the publicity given to the question of naval recruiting by the coloured posters and booklets which are displayed in all post-offices throughout the Dominion will keep before the public the advantages of a life in the navy, and will result in the necessary recruits being obtained.

X. NEW ZEALAND ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

28. Entries into the New Zealand Royal Naval Reserve (men) during the year under review have been as follows :—

Class A. (Inactive)—Men discharged from the seagoing forces in New Zealand, other than those joining Class A (Active Reserve). These men are liable to come up for naval service, in the event of war, if required, within ten- years of discharge from the sea-going forces, if not then over forty years of age	Seaman ratings Signal and W/T ratings Engine-room and stoker ratings Artisan ratings Accountant ratings Steward and cook ratings	7 4 16 1 2 <u>1</u> 31
Class A. (Active)—Men who have served in the Royal Navy or any Dominion Navy	Seaman ratings Signal and WE/T ratings Engine-room and stoker ratings Artisan ratings Sick-berth ratings Master-at-Arms	6 2 12 2 2 <u>2</u> 27
Class B—Men who follow the sea as a profession in the mercantile marine or steam fishing vessels	Seaman ratings Engine-room and stoker ratings	3 <u>5</u> 8
Class C—Men ineligible for entry an Classes A and B	Seaman ratings Signal and WE/T ratings Engine-room and stoker ratings	7 7 <u>2</u> 16
Total		82

29. Men enrolled in Classes A (Active), B, and C are required to come up for training during peace, as laid down in the regulations made by Order in Council of the 10th July, 1922. W/T ratings (Class C) are being selected from volunteers amongst the Telegraph Staff of the Post and Telegraph Department. The personnel manning the radio stations in New Zealand and the islands have been given short courses in naval procedure on board H.M. ships as opportunities have offered:

30. The regulations for the Royal Naval Reserve, Class D, were approved in November, 1924, and a small number of entries has been made. The new regulations establish a fourth class for ratings corresponding to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in the United Kingdom, and a beginning has been made at Auckland, with a view that, if it is successful in that port, an extension may gradually be made to other ports in the Dominion.

31. The regulations for entering officers into the Reserve were also made in November, 1924, and commissions have been issued to those who were selected for the vacancies. By the addition of officers to the Reserve scheme it may be said that the outline of the scheme is now complete, and that training in the future should result in a satisfactory Reserve being available in the Dominion for the purposes of mine-sweeping, &c., should this become necessary.

XI. TECHNICAL COURSES FOR LOCALLY ENTERED RATINGS.

32. As stated in my report for the year ended 31st March, 1924, in accordance with the policy of the Naval Board, a party of New Zealand ratings has been undergoing instruction in the naval training establishments of the United Kingdom. This party completed training and returned to New Zealand at the end of November, 1924, and its members are now serving in H.M.S. "Dunedin."

33. The results of the examinations passed by the ratings concerned were very gratifying both to the Naval Board and the men themselves; each of the seamen ratings obtained either a gunnery or torpedo rating, and those of the other branches qualified for advancement to higher substantive rating.

34. A second batch of thirty-five ratings proceeded to England in H.M.S. "Chatham" at the end of May, 1924, and commenced courses about the end of August. The results of the training of this party are not yet available, but, by the interim reports received, satisfactory progress is being made and there is every reason to believe that their performances will equal those of the earlier party.

35. A further number of ratings is at present undergoing preliminary training locally, with a view to being sent Home about the end of 1925.

XII. EXPENDITURE DURING LAST FINANCIAL YEAR.

36. The sums voted for naval defence for 1924-25, and the amounts expended, were as follows:—

Item.	Voted. £	Expended £	Remarks
(1) Full pay and wages, extra pay, &c.	133,500	161,612	
(2) Administration	9,400	204	Change in Treasury method of dealing with remittances.
(3) Victualling, clothing, and mess-traps	28,475	34,858	Claims not expected to materialize until 1925-26 received and paid.
(4) Medical services	1,650	1,708	
(5) Repairs, docking, &c.	11,100	6,629	Repairs less extensive than anticipated.
(6) Fuel and lighting	61,170	57,362	Claim for fuel used by " Dunedin " on passage out not yet received.
(7) Stores	41,000	17,485	Several large claims not yet received.
(8) Works	26,910	14,050	Second oil-tank not completed, material not having arrived.
(9) Reserves	4,600	1,362	Delay in inauguration of Reserves.
(10) Effective services	13,337	15,891	Freightage on reserve ammunition and store. from previous year dealt with in current year.
(11) Non-effective services	26,370	26,241	
(12) Contingencies and claims from Admiralty	2,000	2,671	Prize-money, which was not allowed for, paid on behalf of Admiralty.
Gross total	359,512	310,073	
Credits	25,677	26,717	
Net total	333,835	283,356	

XIII. ESTIMATES FOR 1925-26.

38. Estimates for the current financial year have been framed with the object of giving effect to the views expressed by the Admiralty as to the lines which, in their opinion, Dominion naval policy should follow.

39. These views are recapitulated below under the headings given by the Admiralty, in the order of their importance, with a statement of the proposals for the current financial year.

(i) *Maintenance of Nucleus of Seagoing Squadron capable of Expansion by Cruisers and Ocea-going Submarines.*—The New Zealand Government have accepted the responsibility for the maintenance of a second cruiser, and (as stated in paragraph 10) H.M.S. "Diomedé" is expected to reach the station about the end of 1925. This additional ship will be able to undertake cruising duties in 1926, and it will thus be possible for the various ports on the station to be visited more frequently.

(ii) *Provision of Oil Reserves in the Dominion.*—The state of the two oil-tanks at present authorized is given in paragraph 14, the first tank being completed. It is hoped that before the end of the present financial year the second tank and pumping-apparatus will be in place, and that one tank will be filled, thus inaugurating the naval reserve of oil fuel.

(iii) *Provision of Bases, Docks, Depots, and Reserves of Stores and Fuel for War-vessels.*—The development of the Naval Base at Auckland is being carried out gradually; provision is made in the estimates for the current financial year for additional berthing-accommodation and for a small reserve of stores. As the sea-going ships of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy will both be oil-burning cruisers, arrangements have been made by which the stocks of coal hitherto maintained in the islands will be taken over by the Imperial Admiralty for the use of the two sloops "Laburnum" and "Veronica," which are coal-burning vessels.

(iv) *Provision of Local Protection of Trade and Storage of Guns for Merchant Ships and their Escorts, and providing Trained Personnel for them.*—It is proposed to erect a small storehouse at Auckland in which shall be stored guns required for local defence vessels and for the defensive armament of merchant ships. Arrangements have been made for the supply of the guns and mountings.

The new Reserve of Officers for the New Zealand Division is in existence, the candidates for entry being of a very satisfactory type. The entry of ratings in the Reserves has been slow, but it is hoped that the newly inaugurated Class D will encourage suitable men to join and perform naval training to make them efficient for naval service in case of emergency.

(v.) *Provision of Mobile Defence and Mine-sweeping Organization.* - It is proposed during the current financial year to purchase a trawler for instructional purposes, this vessel being used for training officers and men in gunnery and mine-sweeping.

XIV. SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES, 1925-26.

39. The estimates for the Naval Defence vote for 1925-26 amount to approximately £110,000 in excess of the vote for 1924-25, the increase being principally due to the projected arrival of H.M.S. "Diomedé" on the station.

40. The following table and notes show the difference between the amounts voted in 1924-25 and the estimated expenditure for 1925-26:-

Item.	Estimates 1925-26 £	Amount voted, 1924-25 £	
Full pay, wages, allowances, extra pay, & Administration, Admiralty, on account of payment of allotments, remittances paid in England, sale of British postal orders, British stamps, &	194,800 400	133,500 9,400	Due to addition of H.M.S. "Diomedé" Bulk of this item now dealt with by Treasury in a deposit account.

Victualling, clothing, implements, and mess-traps	45,000	28,475	Due to addition of H.M.S. "Diomedé"
Medical services	2,425	1,650	Due to addition of H.M.S. "Diomedé"
Repairs, alterations, docking, etc	9,000	11,100	Repairs estimated to be less expensive than anticipated 1924-25.
Fuel and lighting (including freight of coal)	73,100	61,170	Due to addition of H.M.S. "Diomedé"
Stores	54,500	41,000	Due to addition of H.M.S. "Diomedé"
Works	19,950	26,910	Oil tanks partially completed and only £10,000 included in current year's estimates.
Reserves	3,350	4,600	Several non-recurring items included in previous year's estimates.
Miscellaneous effective services	31,327	13,337	Passages of officers and men will be higher than last year. £8,500 placed on estimates for purchase of a trawler.
Non-effective services	30,640	26,370	Due to addition of H.M.S. "Diomedé"
Contingencies, including unforeseen expenditure incidental to other items of vote (part recoverable)	1,000	2,000	Payment of naval prize-money practically completed during last financial year.
Gross total	465,552	359,512	
Credits	21,337	25,677	Smaller credits anticipated on account of coal supplied to Admiralty.
Net total	444,215	333,835	

ALISTER BEALE,
Commodore Commanding the New Zealand Division