

NEW ZEALAND NAVAL FORCES
REPORT OF THE COMMODORE COMMANDING THE NEW ZEALAND STATION,
FOR THE PERIOD 1st APRIL 1925 TO 31st MARCH 1926

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", 10th May, 1926

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, 1925, to 31st March, 1926.

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

On the 1st April, 1925, H.M.S. "Dunedin," under the command of Acting-Captain the Hon. Guy Stopford, arrived at Oamaru from Patterson Inlet (Stewart Island). She then visited Timaru and Akaroa, arriving at Dunedin on the 16th April. At this port I assumed command on my return from the Singapore Conference. The "Dunedin" left Dunedin on the 27th April and proceeded to Wellington for ten days, then going to Auckland, where the ship was taken in hand for refit and docking.

On the 17th June, 1925, the "Dunedin" sailed from Auckland for a cruise to the islands, calling at Nukualofa, Suva, and Lautoka. A period of fourteen days at Lautoka was fully occupied in carrying out various gunnery and torpedo exercises. Owing to the arrival of the United States Fleet in New Zealand, the "Dunedin" returned to the Dominion at the end of July, and remained in Wellington until the 25th August; and, after a short visit to Auckland, she again sailed for the tropics on the 29th August. This portion of the cruise included visits to Sunday Island, Niue, Apia, Pago Pago, Bora Bora, Papeete, and Rarotonga, and the ship returned to Auckland on the 6th October, 1925.

After a few days at Auckland the "Dunedin" proceeded to Wellington, where the annual rifle Practice was carried out at the ranges at Trentham between the 16th October and the 12th November. As in previous years, the course proved of great value to both officers and men, and I appreciate deeply the privilege accorded to the Navy by the General Officer Commanding and military authorities in granting the use of Trentham Camp, and also for the admirable arrangements made for the comfort of the officers and men undergoing musketry training. The annual course is an event which is looked forward to with eagerness by all concerned.

On the following day the "Dunedin" left Wellington for Dunedin in order to be at that port for the opening of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition. A naval guard of honour was provided for His Excellency the Governor-General at the opening ceremony, and a small naval exhibit, which seems to have proved of considerable interest to visitors, was provided at the Exhibition.

On leaving Dunedin on the 27th November, 1925, the ship proceeded to Lyttelton for a few days and thence to Auckland, where exercises were carried out in the Hauraki Gulf prior to entering harbour for the purpose of giving Christmas leave to officers and men.

During February, 1926, H.M.S. "Dunedin" carried out exercises in the vicinity of Auckland with H.M.S. "Diomed," and during March these vessels exercised with the Australian Squadron as stated in paragraph vi. On the 25th March, the two New Zealand cruisers left for a cruise to the principal ports of the Dominion.

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

On the 21st October, 1925, H.M.S. "Diomed" was commissioned at Portsmouth for service with the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy, her Commanding Officer being Captain J. S. M. Ritchie, R.N. (a native of Dunedin, New Zealand). This cruiser had recently returned to England after commission on the China Station, and was brought fully up to date by the Imperial authorities before leaving England for the Dominion.

On the 17th November, 1925, the ship was visited by Earl Jellicoe of Scapa, lately Governor General of this Dominion, who addressed the ship's company prior to their departure. The visit was very much appreciated by all on board.

On the 20th November the Hon. Sir James Allen, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., High Commissioner for New Zealand in London, and Rear-Admiral Alan Hotham, C.B., C.M.G., lately the Commodore Commanding the New Zealand Station, also visited the ship, and the former addressed the ship's company.

On the 21st November the "Diomed" sailed from Portsmouth and proceeded to the Dominion, calling at Bermuda and Jamaica, passing through Panama Canal, then calling at San Pedro (California), Honolulu, Hawaii, and Suva. The ship arrived at Auckland on the 21st January, 1926.

At San Pedro, at the end of December, 1925, the "Diomed" met various ships of the United States Fleet which had visited New Zealand during August. Both officers and men were most hospitably entertained by the United States naval and other officials. Christmas Day was spent at sea between San Pedro and Honolulu.

At Hawaii a visit was paid to the monument to Captain Cook at Kaawaloa, and some small defects were made good.

On the arrival of H.M.S. "Diomed" at Auckland arrangements were made for transfer of certain petty officers and men, with a view to an equal number of New Zealanders serving in each of the seagoing cruisers of the New Zealand Division.

In February and March, 1926, H.M.S. "Diomed" carried out exercises in the Hauraki Gulf and the vicinity of Auckland, in the first instance with H.M.S. "Dunedin," and subsequently with the ships of the Australian Squadron. She left Auckland on the 25th March for visits to New Zealand ports, including Russell, Lyttelton, Dunedin, Wellington, and Nelson.

III. H.M.S. "PHILOMEL"

H.M.S. "Philomel" has continued her duties as training-ship and depot-ship at Auckland. The training of recruits is carried out entirely to my satisfaction, and reflects credit on all concerned. It is proposed during the coming year to provide further appliances, and thus to improve the training of newly entered stoker ratings.

Further portions of the machinery of H.M.S. "Philomel" have been removed as opportunity offered. The ship is now connected to the shore system of lighting, and considerable economy will thereby be effected.

Commander F. N. Miles, O.B.E., R.N., was relieved in the command of "Philomel" in January, 1926, by Commander F. C. Bradley, R.N.

IV. H.M. SLOOPS "LABURNUM" AND "VERONICA."

H.M.S. "Laburnum" left Auckland on the 22nd May, 1925, to visit the islands on the western portion of the station: She called at Suva, Ocean Island, Tarawa, the smaller islands of the Gilbert and Ellice Groups, Wakaya, Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Lautoka, and Nukualofa, returning to Auckland on the 6th October, 1925.

Towards the end of November, 1925, trouble arose at Ocean Island between Chinese and Gilbert Island labourers, which rendered the presence of a man-of-war desirable to assist the Civil authorities in dealing with the situation. In response to a request from the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, H.M.S. "Laburnum" was despatched from Auckland on the 3rd December, arriving at Ocean Island on the 13th of that month.

On the request of the Resident Commissioner, an armed party was landed from H.M.S. "Laburnum" to assist the Civil authorities in their search for smuggled arms, and to enable them to effect the arrest of the ringleaders of the disturbance, who were conveyed to Suva in H.M.S. "Laburnum." During the absence of the ship, which returned to Suva in order to coal and disembark the ringleaders, an armed guard was left behind on the island for some weeks. On the return of H.M.S. "Laburnum" with a force of Fijian Police, the situation being quiet, the armed guard was re-embarked and the ship proceeded to Auckland, arriving on the 15th. February, 1926.

Commander C. E. Brooke, R.N., assumed command of H.M.S. "Laburnum" on the 6th October, in succession to Commander S. K. Smyth, R.N., who returned to England.

H.M.S. "Veronica" left Auckland on the 11th June, 1925. During her cruise she visited Pago Pago, Apia, Hull Island, Sydney Island, Atafu, Nukuneue, Fakaofu, Murea, Bora Bora, Papeete, Rarotonga, Niue, Nivafou, Suva, Wakaya, and Levuka, returning on the 4th November. Both sloops have undergone a refit while at Auckland.

V. R.F.A. "NUCULA."

The R.F.A. "Nucula" has made three voyages to California to obtain oil fuel for H.M. ships and for filling the first tank erected at Auckland; each voyage occupied approximately two months. She attended on H.M. ships as necessary.

The engagement of the master, who was transferred with the ship by the Imperial Government, having expired in November, 1925, the vacancy was filled locally. It is proposed to relieve other officers in the same way when their engagements are at an end.

VI. VISITS OF WARSHIPS TO THE DOMINIONS.

During August, 1925, the United States Fleet visited ports of the Dominion, remaining about fourteen days in New Zealand waters. This powerful fleet was making a cruise around the Pacific Ocean, and, after visits to Australian and other ports, reached the Dominion on the 11th August.

The fleet was under the command of Admiral R. E. Coontz, and consisted of twelve battleships, four cruisers, twenty-seven destroyers, and twelve auxiliaries. The battleships visited Auckland and Wellington only, the smaller craft visiting Lyttelton and Dunedin before proceeding to Wellington to join up with the Flag of the Commander-in-Chief. The divisions from Wellington and Auckland met in the vicinity of the latter port on the 26th August and proceeded north on the homeward voyage.

The French sloop "Cassiopee" arrived at Dunedin from Australia on the 24th January, 1926, and, after visits to Lyttelton, Wellington, and Auckland, sailed on the 2nd March for Noumea.

On the 18th February, 1926, the Japanese training-ship "Iwate" arrived at Wellington from Australia, and stayed a few days at that port and at Auckland prior to sailing for Japan on the 3rd March.

During February and March an Australian Squadron consisting of H.M.A.S. "Sydney," H.M.A.S. "Adelaide," and H.M.S. "Delhi" visited the Dominion, being under the command of Commodore T E. Wardle, D.S.O., R.N. These ships in the first place visited Dunedin and Lyttelton, spent a few days at Wellington, and then proceeded to the Hauraki Gulf, where they arrived on the 8th March.

Combined exercises of great value to both the Australian and New Zealand ships were carried out for a period of ten days, H.M. ships "Dunedin" and "Diomedea" taking part. It is of the utmost importance that combined exercises of this nature shall take place at frequent intervals, as it enables considerable knowledge to be obtained on tactical and other problems. After the conclusion of the exercises the Australian ships visited Auckland from the 17th to the 24th March, when they sailed for Australia.

VII. RECRUITING FOR THE SEAGOING FORCES.

The following table shows the numbers finally entered during the period 1st April, 1925, to 31st March, 1926:—

Regimental District	Ordinary Seamen and Boys.	Stokers.	Artificers and Artisans.	Cooks and Stewards.	Other Ratings.	Total.
Auckland	10	7	3	1	..	21
Paeroa	5	1	..	..	..	6
Whangarei	3	1	..	..	..	4
Hamilton	2	1	..	..	..	3
Wellington	6	3	1	..	1	11
Palmerston North	4	7	..	..	1	12
Napier	2	..	..	..	..	2
Hawera	4	1	..	..	..	5
Nelson	..	..	..	..	..	..
Christchurch	4	4	..	..	..	8
Dunedin	1	2	..	..	..	3
Invercargill	1	2	..	..	..	3
Totals	42	29	4	1	2	78

The following table shows the numbers discharged or dismissed during the period 1st April, 1925, to 31st March, 1926, after final entry :—

Cause.	Able Seamen, Ordinary Seamen, and Boys.	Stokers.	Other Ratings.	Total.
Services no longer required, unsuitable, dismissed as a punishment-	12	3	1	16
Desertion.	5	3	1	9
Invalided	5	1	1	7
By purchase	2	4	..	4
Totals	22	11	3	36

Recruiting during the past financial year has resulted in the entry of approximately the numbers required.

VIII. NEW ZEALAND ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

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). These men are liable to come up for naval service, in the event of war, if required, within ten years of discharge from the seagoing forces, if not then over forty years of age	Seaman ratings	3
	Engine-room and stoker ratings	5
	Artisan ratings	1
	Steward and cook ratings	<u>1</u>
		10
Class A. (Active)—Men who have served in the Royal Navy or any Dominion Navy	Seaman ratings	6
	Signal and WE/T ratings	1
	Engine-room and stoker ratings	8
	Artisan ratings	<u>1</u>
		16
Class B—Men who follow the sea as a profession in the mercantile marine or steam fishing vessels	Seaman ratings	1
Class C—Men ineligible for entry in Classes A and B	Seaman ratings	7
	Signal and WE/T ratings	3
	Engine-room and stoker ratings	4
	Accountant ratings	<u>2</u>
		16
Total		43

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 selected from volunteers amongst the Telegraph staff of the Post and Telegraph Department.

Class D, Royal Naval Reserve.

Class D, Royal Naval Reserve, which consists entirely of volunteers, has been inaugurated at Auckland with conspicuous success. The numbers enrolled consist of eighteen officers and 120 men. After undergoing preliminary training on shore, five officers and seventy-five men have been embarked in the cruisers of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy during periods of exercise, in order to undergo sea training. The results have been highly gratifying. Officers and men are keen to learn and to become thoroughly efficient. Further progress in training will be made on the arrival of the trawler "Wakakura," and it is certain that a fine and efficient force for local defence will develop rapidly. Special credit is due to Commander J. R. Middleton, D.S.O., R.N.V.R., N.Z.D. (Captain Royal Navy, retired) and to Lieut.-Commander C. H. T. Palmer, R.N.V.R., for the care and attention which they have given towards the training and development of this valuable force.

IX. TECHNICAL COURSES FOR LOCALLY-ENTERED RATINGS.

The policy of sending selected locally-entered ratings for higher training in naval establishment in the United Kingdom has been continued with satisfactory results. Eight able seamen, one signalman, and twenty-five stoker ratings returned to New Zealand in "Diomede" after having completed their courses and seen service in battleships of the Atlantic Fleet; one electrical artificer, seven able seamen, one signalman, one sick-berth attendant, and two stokers are now in England undergoing courses, and five selected able seamen will proceed Home in August for the same purpose. Most satisfactory reports have been received of the character and progress made by New Zealand ratings during their courses at home.

X. EXPENDITURE DURING FINANCIAL YEAR 1925-26.

The sums voted for naval defence for 1925-26, and the amounts expended, were as follows:-

Item.	Voted. £	Expended £
Full pay and wages, extra pay, &c.	194,800	170,907
Administration	400	213
Victualling, clothing, and mess-traps	48,287	50,329
Medical services	2,425	2,033
Repairs, docking, &c.	9,000	6,955
Fuel and lighting	73,220	70,742
Stores*	54,500	76,330
Works	24,900	19,334
Reserves	4,220	3,616
Effective services	31,427	26,783
Non-effective services	30,640	27,345
Contingencies and claims from Admiralty	1,000	1,058
Gross total	474,819	455,645
Credits	25,737	14,442
Net total	449,082	441,203

* Stores to the value of £13,000 (approximately) not paid for, 1924-25.

XI. ESTIMATES FOR 1926-27.

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 on which, in their opinion, Dominion naval policy should follow. The views are recapitulated below under the headings given by the Admiralty, in the order of their importance, with a brief statement of the proposals for the current financial year.

(i.) *Maintenance of Nucleus of Seagoing Squadron capable of Expansion by Cruisers and Ocean-going Submarines.*—H.M.S. "Diomedé" arrived on the station in January, 1926, and the Dominion now has on loan two modern seagoing cruisers of a very efficient type. The addition of H.M.S. "Diomedé" will be a great advantage from many points of view, the principal reason being that, with only one ship, it was impossible to carry out certain exercises of a highly important nature. The "Dunedin" and "Diomedé" can now each perform certain services for the other, and a spirit of competition, which is, in my opinion, essential for efficiency, has been introduced, to the mutual advantage of both ships. Provision has been made for paying a proportion of the cost of a battle-practice target, which will considerably increase the efficiency of the cruisers.

(ii.) *Provision of Oil Reserves in the Dominion.*—The second oil-fuel tank at Auckland is now constructed, and it is proposed to fill it during the present financial year. The pumping-apparatus is not yet completed, and certain subsidiary items are still required, but space is now available for a stock of approximately 10,000 tons of oil.

(iii.) *Provision of Bases, Docks, Depots, and Reserves of Stores and Fuel for War-vessels.*—The Naval Base at Devonport, Auckland, is being gradually developed. The new storehouse for naval stores is completed, and many articles required for H.M. ships are now available for issue. Additional accommodation for guns and torpedoes has also been provided. Large stocks of coal are no longer maintained by New Zealand, the Admiralty having taken over the stocks maintained in the islands.

(iv.) *Provision of Local Protection of Trade and Storage 'of Guns for Merchant Ships and their Escorts, and providing Trained Personnel for them.*—The necessary guns and mountings for protection of merchant ships and escorts are being provided at Auckland, and it is now proposed to begin the accumulation of ammunition for them. The necessary storage space is available.

The Naval Reserves of the Dominion are growing, and the entries are of a very satisfactory type. Training is now being carried out, including training in cruisers at sea; on the arrival of the trawler "Wakakura" training at sea in this vessel will be begun.

(v.) *Provision of Mobile Defence and Mine-sweeping Organization.*—A very suitable trawler has been purchased for mine-sweeping and other duties, and this vessel should arrive early in the financial year. Provision has been made in the estimates for 1926-27 for the supply of suitable mine-sweeping gear of the most modern type, and, on receipt, the training in this duty will be started.

XII. SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES, 1926-27.

The estimates for the naval defence vote for 1926-27 amount to approximately £85,000 in excess of the vote for 1925-26, the increase being principally due to the arrival of H.M.S. "Diomedé" on the station.

The following table and notes show the difference between the amounts voted in 1925-26 and the estimated expenditure for 1926-27 :—

Item.	Estimates 1926-27 £	Amount voted, 1925-26 £	
Full pay, wages, allowances, extra pay, &	236,360	194,800	Increase due to bearing H.M.S. "Diomedé" for whole year.
Administration, Admiralty, on account of payment of allotments, remittances paid in England, sale of British postal orders, British stamps, &	400	400	
Victualling, clothing, implements, and mess-traps	64,250	48,287	Increase due to bearing H.M.S. "Diomedé" for whole year.
Medical services	2,550	2,425	
Repairs, alterations, docking, etc	8,400	9,000	
Fuel and lighting (including freight of coal)	50,900	73,220	Oil fuel not so costly as last year.
Stores	46,380	54,500	Reserve of stores included in last year's estimates.
Works	10,582	24,900	Oil tanks have been completed.
Reserves	5,345	4,220	Increase of numbers to be enrolled.
Miscellaneous effective services	36,817	31,427	"Diomedé" borne for whole year.
Non-effective services	96,990	30,640	"Diomedé" borne for whole year.
Contingencies, including unforeseen expenditure incidental to other items of vote (part recoverable)	1,000	1,000	
Gross total	559,974	474,819	
Credits	25,967	25,737	
Net total	534,007	449,082	

I have, &c.,

ALISTER BEAL,

Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station.