



## LONGCAST

- 5 June 23 - Monarchs Birthday
- 16 June 23 - NGA Assn Lunch at Henderson RSA
- 9 July 23 - Ngapona Assn AGM at Birkenhead RSA
- 21 July 23 - Lunch at the Bays Club

### Hi Folks

#### **A CALL FOR YOUR HELP**

John McEwan is writing further chapters of "Auckland Rockies". This well researched, 455-page work, covers the history of the Naval Reserve Forces from 1858 to 1995. John is now researching the period from 1995 to 2020, and needs the help of those who were members of Ngapona during that period. He would really appreciate any information from personal diaries etc, particularly of the years 2000-2009, when Ngapona moved from St Mary's Bay to the Devonport Naval Base. He wants to ensure that he gets the time line right for the move.

This is a general call to all past and serving members to get any records and photographs during this period, especially overseas service by our people. Any unique actions or stories would be of considerable help.

#### **NGAPONA ASSN - AGM**

The Ngapona Association Annual General Meeting is going to be held at the Birkenhead RSA at 1500 on 9 July 23. All Ngapona Reserve Personnel who are Assn. Members are encouraged to attend. Any other personnel posted to Ngapona are also invited. It is a good opportunity to join for some fellowship and

come and meet the Assn. and join.

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE NGAPONA ASSN**

Full membership is open to serving and ex members of HMNZS Ngapona. Associate membership is open to all others who have an interest in nautical affairs (subject to approval by the Executive Committee.) Join us for the comradery enjoyed by our members. Joining fee is only \$40.00 and no annual subscription. Membership for serving members of Ngapona is free. Refer [www.ngapona.org.nz](http://www.ngapona.org.nz)

### **VETERANS' AFFAIRS ONLINE FORUM**

This brief informative online event aims to help you understand your entitlements and any other support that Veterans' Affairs can offer you. You will hear answers to commonly asked questions and you can also ask questions of our staff. You can ask a question when you register.

We'll email you closer to the time of the forum with a link to join the Zoom and any other details you need to know.

More information about this event will be published on our Facebook page and website in the coming days.

For further information, Google 'Veterans' Affairs Online Forum'

### **CHARGES FILED**

In response to two tragic incidents that occurred in April, New Zealand has taken legal measures by filing charges related to the fatalities that took place at its ports, reports Ventura, California's gCaptain. The investigations were launched following the deaths of Atiroa Tuaiti at the Ports of Auckland on April 19, 2022, and Donald Grant at the Port of Lyttelton on April 25 of the same year. Maritime NZ, the governing body responsible for maritime safety in New Zealand, has filed charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA). Wallace Investments, the stevedoring company, now faces one charge in connection with the death of Mr Tuaiti. The incident occurred when Mr Tuaiti tragically suffered fatal injuries while working on a docked container ship and was crushed by a container. Regarding the death of Mr Grant, Maritime NZ has filed two HSWA charges against the Lyttelton Port Company. The incident occurred on April 25, 2022, when Mr Grant was struck by coal during the loading process into a vessel's hatch.

### **THIS WOULD SAVE BUILDING ANOTHER HARBOUR BRIDGE**

'Splashtours' offers a city tour in Rotterdam unlike any other. A tour in the unique amphibian bus is an unforgettable experience for young and old.



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### **‘USS CANBERRA’ TO BE COMMISSIONED**

The United States Navy will be commissioning a vessel, the USS CANBERRA, in an allied country for the first time in history. The ship is an Independence-variant littoral combat ship, and once commissioned will hold the designation USS CABERRA (LCS 30), with its homeport in Naval Base San Diego, California, USA. The USS CANBERRA is named after the previous USS CABERRA (CA7/CAG-2) and the capital of Australia, Canberra. The ship was laid down on the 10 March 2020, and launched on the 30 March 2021. The ship will be commissioned at the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Base East, in Sydney on July 22.



## LAST SURVIVOR OF HMAS PERTH

At 1045 pm, Wednesday 24 May 2023, Frank McGovern, the sole living survivor of HMAS PERTH, crossed the bar peacefully, aged 103.

For those who do not know Frank McGovern, Commander Steve Youll OAM RAN (Rtd.) gave the following biographical summary.

“Frank McGovern, at 19 years of age joined the Royal Australian Navy on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 1939. After initial training, he was posted to HMAS WESTRALIA until November 1941 when he was posted to HMAS PERTH.

In February 1942, PERTH joined the Allied Fleet defending the Dutch East Indies, (now Indonesia) and saw action in the Battle of the Java Sea on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1942.

HMAS PERTH and USS HOUSTON, having survived that battle, were ordered south. Sailing in company PERTH and HOUSTON encountered a large Japanese invasion fleet in the Sunda Strait on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> February. Despite gallant efforts, both PERTH and HOUSTON succumbed to superior forces and were sunk shortly after midnight on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

Frank survived the sinking and after many hours in the water finally made it ashore where he was captured by the Japanese and made a Prisoner of War (POW). He was then sent to Singapore and interned in Changi Prison Camp. Shortly thereafter he was selected to work on the infamous Thai-Burma railway, where he endured horrific conditions.

Following the completion of the railway, Frank was taken to Saigon to await transportation to Japan. The US Navy had blockaded the Mekong Delta, so Frank was taken back to Changi from where he boarded the Japanese freighter, *Rakuyo Maru*, in September 1944, one of two ships carrying about 2,200 British and Australian POWs destined for Japan. On the night of 12<sup>th</sup> September, both ships were attacked and sunk by US submarines. Some 1,700 POWs lost their lives, either killed or drowned as a result. Some were fortunate to be rescued by US submarines. Frank was not among them, being one of about 300 picked up by a Japanese destroyer and transported to Japan as forced labour. Frank's internment camp was destroyed in the firebombing of Tokyo in March 1945. Frank was then sent to work in a steel mill; however, the steel mill was bombed on the night of 13<sup>th</sup> July. Three of Frank's mates were killed during the air raid, in which Frank also suffered a fractured spine.

While in the internment camp, Frank and his fellow POW's saw a bright flash in the skies from the direction of Hiroshima which turned out to be one of the two atomic bombs dropped by the Americans that resulted in the unconditional surrender of Japan.

Upon hearing of the Japanese surrender and the disappearance of the guards, the POW's painted 'I Surrender' on the roof of their building. The Americans dropped food and leaflets advising the prisoners to remain where they were until rescued.

After spending some time recuperating in hospital Frank returned home on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1945. It was a bittersweet moment when he learned that his brother, Vincent, had been killed in action during the Sunda Strait action.

In the aftermath of his war and POW experiences, Frank found it difficult to assimilate with people who had not shared his experiences, so he formed the HMAS PERTH and Naval POW's Association. Members of his Association met on a monthly basis to provide ongoing companionship and support each other until their numbers had dwindled to so few that Frank amalgamated his Association with the HMAS PERTH National Association in 1998.

In three and half years, from February 1942 to September 1945, Frank endured two horrendous naval battles, the sinking of two ships, the horrors of being a prisoner of war on the Thai-Burma railway, forced labour in Japan. His experiences and fortitude were unique.

However, his lasting legacy is the support that he gave to his fellow former prisoners of war in an era when there was little support for veterans, let alone former prisoners of war. Prisoners of war in the community was a new phenomenon in Australia in the aftermath of World War II. Many of their experiences were not understood by the public and government. Their repatriation was not proper.

informed or resourced either by previous experience or detailed analysis. There was also at the time reluctance by many POWs to discuss their ordeals, residual effects and potential needs with those hadn't had a similar experience.

It was left to men, like Frank, who although only in his late 20s, perceived the need for companionship and support among his fellow POW's.

It is a testament to Frank's foresight, compassion and endeavour that his HMAS PERTH and Naval POW's Association continued to provide a unique support network to former POWs, that had not been available elsewhere, for more than 50 years.

The HMAS PERTH National Association was more than willing to take over the mantle from Frank's organisation in 1998, while Frank remained an active and valuable contributor to the Association's support for its World War II veterans, especially the former POWs, Vietnam veterans and those of more recent conflicts."



### **NEW FIJIAN CRUISE SHIP**

Captain Cook Cruises Fiji is reportedly acquiring the CALEDONIAN SKY. According to a local media report, the Fiji Islands-based cruise line will operate the vessel under a long-term charter agreement. Currently in service for APT Cruises, the 114-guest ship was built in 1991 and originally sailed as Renaissance Cruises' RENAISSANCE VI.

Source: [cruiseindustrynews](http://cruiseindustrynews.com)



### **TRADE ROUTE TO OPEN**

Russia will begin year-round voyages from the Arctic to Asia along the eastern section of the North

Sea Route (NSR) from 2024, an opening of a trade-lane with huge implications for the global seabo map. "Together with Novatek, we plan to launch year-round navigation in the eastern part of the N early next year. This is a truly historic decision, important for the development of the entire Arctic of particular importance, of course, for the economy of our country," said Alexei Likhachev, CEO of Rosatom, operator of Russia's nuclear-powered icebreaker fleet. Novatek has been developing ma LNG plants in the Arctic over the past decade to supply customers in Asia.

*Source: Splash 247*

## **NAVAL AUXILIARY PATROL SERVICE**

### **Z26 LADY MARGARET II**

Skipper, Bill Darlow; Deputy Skipper, George Stitt. Crew: Nev.

Jones, George Scott, H. K. Brown, Allan Doull, Roy Pegler, Dick Chadfield, Jack Taylor.

Great crew for "switch it," but not on the fire. It is understood the Army don't like the ship. Known to always make their guests ill before playing cards. Late Harbour Board Chairman knows a few fishing spots, and Z26 did a good job on Sundays off Milford. It is not suggested that this noble band did any fishing themselves. No doubt

Bill has a few friends on fishing boats. Did North Head fire on you, and if so, why?

Known as "brother," this ship has had an interesting career. Had good fire power; but don't play with it.

*(From NAPS booklet)*

### **Z27 WAKATERE**

WAKATERE was built by Lidgards for Ray Vincent, the well-known truck wrecker and repairer. She was in NAPS as Z27 between 1942 and 1943 with Ray as skipper. P.D. Simmonds of Tauranga owned her in the early 1960s when she had a 90hp Graymarine.

She was based at Mercury Island as the island managers boat, for a period in the later 1950's – early 60's.. In 2014 she was undergoing a protracted major refit, which started in the early 1990's & it appears work has stalled on her. She still has her 60hp 4 cyl Ford still in place, having been refitted after an overhaul, as part of her present restoration. The hull has had a Major work over, having been splined & sheathed in fibreglass. In addition, a little rot around the deck lines has been removed & some fairly major refastening work, in respect of the ribs.

She was lengthened to 40 feet a good number of years ago, so she in fact now looks a little different to her

sister ship Isa Lei (Taipari), search Isa Lei to view. She still has her special tuck lines.

*(Waitemata Woodys)*

Skipper, Ray Vincent; Deputy Skipper, P. B. White; Crew: S. M. Boggs, A.B.; A. V. Hardley; R. C. Hardley, A.B.; L. C. Hardley, AM.; E. C. Gibbons, A.B.; A. Innes, A.B.; G. D. W. Wright, O.D.

Served on Boom Patrol and Boom Examination Vessel. Has a deep-sea diver aboard who had to pay £10 for a wrist watch. How the price of watches has gone up since the war! She was chased by a scow one night but they veered off as soon as they saw the White Ensign.

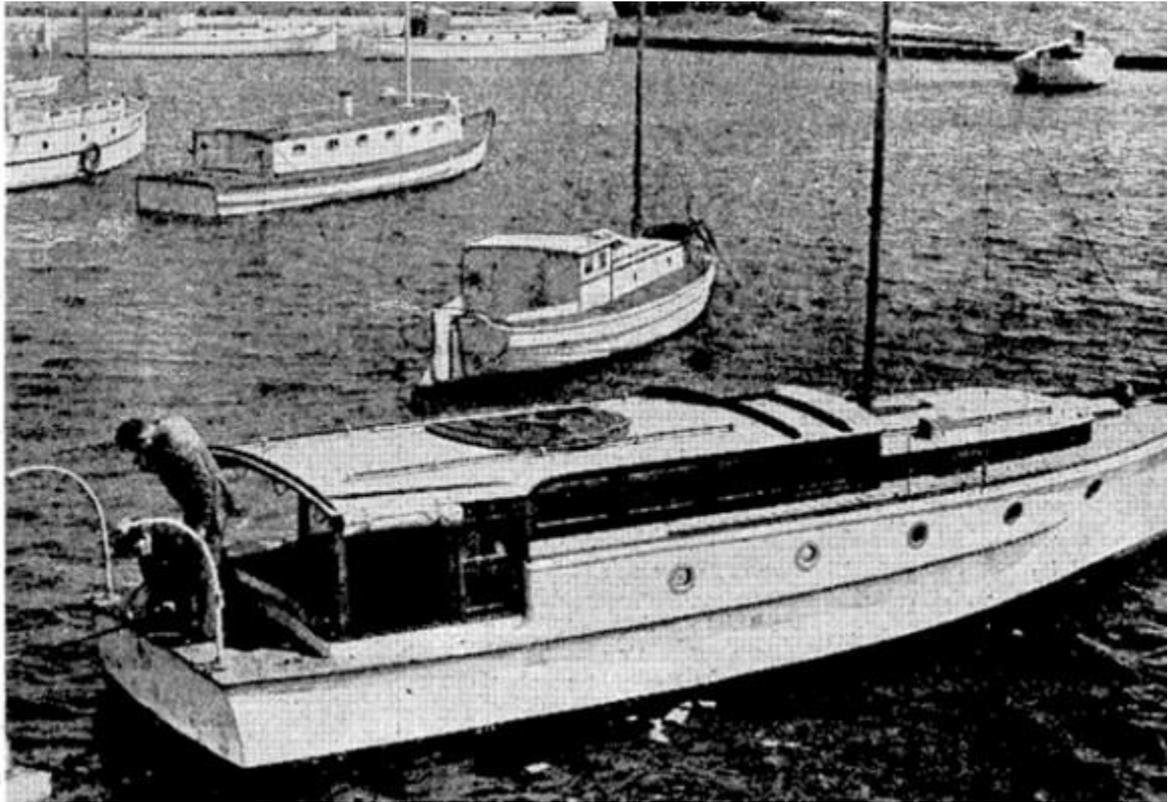
*(From NAPS Booklet)*



### **Z28 ELLEMAR**

ELLEMAR was a 36-footer built by Joe Wheeler at Bayswater in December 1937 for H. Roper of Mt. Eden. She was in NAPS at Auckland 1942-3 as Z28 with Walker as skipper for some of the time. An ELLEMAR turns up in 1955 owned in Invercargill and being converted by Miller & Tunnage to twin screw with two Austin Skippers.

*(Waitemata Woodys)*



A launch very similar in design to Ellemar

#### **Z29 KENYA**

Skipper, Len Heard, now replaced by his son, Aub (about time too); Deputy Skipper, Jack Frater;

Crew: Leo, Stewart, Merv Mair, Arthur Colclough and Bill Ramsay.

Served on Boom Patrol, C.M Base Duties, General Duties, Degaussing

and certain mysterious missions to the North. The "Silent Service." Has

on board the authors of that well-known book, "The Suez Patrol" - Len Heard and Jack Frater.

*(From NAPS booklet)*



Kenya as launched – 1928 at Judges' Bay, Auckland



Kenya now named Mataroa 2023

Regards

**Jerry Payne**

Editor

HMNZS Ngapona Assn

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