



SCUTTLE BUTT
ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVAL ASSN
(GISBORNE BRANCH)
September 2009

AHOY SHIPMATES, KIA ORA

NAVY DAY To be held on Sunday 4 October 2009. Parade at 1100 hours. Fall in at 1045 hours. **Please support us.**

MID YEAR DINNER This is being held a wee bit later this year to coincide with the visit of HMNZS Manawanui. It will be held on 10 October 2009 at 1830 hours at a cost of \$25.00 per head.
Please let Secretary Sue know by 8 October numbers attending.
Ph: 863 2413

SUBSCRIPTIONS These are now due at \$15.00 per person.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING To be held Wednesday 7 October 2009 at 1900 hours.

AIR FORCE DAY To be held on Sunday 20 September 2009. Parade at 1100 hours.

RAFFLES **Please come and support us.**

12 September
7 November
12 December

PAID IN DRAW

14 – 17 October
2 – 5 December

2009 CONFERENCE Secretary Sue and husband Cameron represented our Branch. Found going to conference is very informative. Branch Rules and National Council Rules are set at conference. No branch can change any rules to suit themselves. This is so everyone around the country are treated the same. This is what the National RSA wishes to bring in from 2011 so all RSA are the same and everyone knows where they stand.

WEBSITE We now have our own national website set up and looks great at www.rnzna.org.nz

THE DITTY BOX Contact Bill Lochrie at sec@rnzna.org.nz
The Ditty Box is available at \$12.00 for 4 issues per year.

Karamea Chronicle

Produced by the Karamea Information & Resource Centre

Ph 7826 652

"In touch with our community"

Monday Dec 1, 2008

Lachlan Lads Showed Their Paces

A recent visitor to Karamea was returning after 50 years—as a 19 year old he was part of a navy survey of ocean depths along the rough stretch of coastline between Patarau, south of Cape Farewell, to Karamea. As shore trig stations had to be established, two parties of naval men and Lands and Survey Department surveyors had to make arduous trips along this section of the coast, partly by truck and partly on foot.

Oral history tells us that Maori originally traversed this rugged coastline as part of an ancient greenstone trade route, while redoubtable explorers Heaphy and Brunner left a graphic description of their 3 week trip along the coastline in 1846. Only the very hardy have ever attempted this gruelling trek, although family members took up the challenge and returned to Golden Bay around the coast in just 3 days! A few years ago Peter Elliott and a film crew likewise followed in Heaphy's footsteps, filming for the documentary series *The Explorers*, this time ably assisted by helicopter!

The survey was a test of efficiency, organisation and endurance by two parties from the HMNZS Lachlan. For one group it meant a strenuous 50-mile trek by truck to the lighthouse at Kahurangi Point. The second party organised an equally arduous supply operation from Karamea, laying down food supplies for the northern party.

The object was to set up trig stations, by means of which the Lachlan could fix accurate details of ocean depths off this part of the coast. They also used a comparatively new Dutch invention, the tellurometer, to record exact measurement of distances.

Those who watched the Explorer series on TV will appreciate that this is an area that has changed little since Tasman sailed this way in 1842 – mile high mountains, rain forest ridges that drop sheer into the sea between deep gorges, miles of tumbled rocks and high bluffs, of gigantic landslips and flooded rivers, with here and there short stretches of soft sandy beaches.

The northern party were able to journey into the lighthouse at Kahurangi Point by truck and set up a camp in an old farmhouse. But for the 20 miles between Kahurangi Point and the Heaphy Bluff, heavy instruments and all other gear had to be carried over what seemed like impossible and impassable obstacles, "on the man."

From the Kohaihai unlikely looking packhorses, against unbelievable odds, got most of the gear as far as the Heaphy, but from there on to Rocks Point, 20 miles further north, all the gear had to be carried by "shanks pony!" Apart from setting up a food supply depot the men also had to set up a radio station to keep in touch with the ship -this meant heavy loads including a generator, batteries, and fuel, dealing with flooded rivers and creeks, bolting packhorses and lost loads. Miraculously, a crate of eggs escaped serious damage when catapulted off the back of a runaway horse! Locals who helped pack in the car batteries have some colourful tales to tell.

That the trips in from the Karamea end were exhausting and repetitive, and required all the mens concentration and skill to reach their destination safely without incident is attested to in an old diary from the Heaphy Hut, dated Feb/March 1958. The men tell of "packhorses that don't like sailors", of it "raining cats and dogs," of being "wet and miserable with too many damn insects," of the "3rd trip in 3 days, longest trip 13 hours," of "7th trip, one more and then out for good," "never again!!! Karamea pub tonight." Fine days were rare and the sandflies hell.

While the mission was successfully accomplished, the experiences of both ground parties proved that even with the latest scientific equipment



- tellurometer, radar, and radio, the Navy still had to rely on the earliest form of transport known - foot!

Remains of several old campsites used by the Lachlan crew are still in evidence along the coast.

This wild, unrelenting, and unforgiving stretch of coastline is best left under the guardianship of the seals and seabirds!

This article was given to me by Alf Barber at Conference. It is about Lachlan 1958.

His contact details are as follows:

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EMAIL ADDRESS

If you have a email address I can send your newsletter to, please send an email to me at sue.cam@xtra.co.nz this will cut down on our postage in a big way and you will get your newsletter quicker.

The future of our RSA is in the hands of the members. If you do not support your local RSA we may have to look at amalgamation or closing. The old saying is now very appropriate.

USE IT OR LOSE IT

and Service can join at anytime and will only have to pay the 2009 fee of \$30.00.

PLEASE SUPPORT US IN ALL OUR ACTIVITIES AS OUR NUMBERS ARE NOW BECOMING QUITE LOW AND WE ARE GETTING THE SAME 5 TO 7 PEOPLE CARRYING THE WORK LOAD AND KEEPING THE NAVY PROFILE UP IN GISBORNE.

If you wish to put any notices in the newsletter please do not hesitate to contact me.
Sue McKeen
Secretary/Editor