



Subject: HMNZDT/HMNZS *Manawanui I-III* 1948-2018

Ship Details:



Manawanui I [RNZN Museum ABV 0002]

Manawanui I

Type:	Tug 1948-1952, Diving Tender 1953-1978
Service:	Taken over 20/10/1948, commissioned November 1948
Decommissioned:	mid-1978
Dimensions:	23.1 x 22.5 x 5.6m
Displacement:	74 tonnes
Built:	Steel Ships Auckland completed in August 1945 to USN design
Machinery:	1 x diesel engine 320 bhp = 10 knots

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Manawanui II

Type:	Diving Tender
Pennant Number:	A04 <i>Manawanui II</i>
Laid Down:	8 December 1979
Completed:	23 May 1979
Commissioned:	As HMNZDT <i>Manawanui</i> 28 May 1979 (pennant A04), renamed as HMNZS <i>Kahu</i> 17 May 1988.
Displacement:	105 tonnes
Machinery:	2 x shaft Cummins diesel engines bhp 730 = 12 knots
Complement:	Sixteen officers and ratings as diving tender
Dimensions:	26.8 x 24.4 x 6.1 x 2.2m
Armament:	Small arms only ¹

¹ R.J. McDougall, *New Zealand Naval Vessels*, Christchurch: GP Books, 1989, pp. 136-137.

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*Manawanui III****Manawanui III***

Type:	Diving Support Ship
Builder:	Cochrane Shipbuilders, Shelby England
Completed:	1979 – laid up October 1987
Commissioned:	5 April 1988
Pennant No.	A09
Machinery:	2 x 565hp Caterpillar marine diesels, 2x shafts with controllable pitch propellers, bow thruster = 10.7 knots
Range:	9250km @ 10 knots
Dimensions:	43.6 x 9.5 x 3.2m
Complement:	24 officers and ratings
Displacement:	911 tonnes
Armament:	Small arms only
Fittings:	13-tonne capacity crane, workshop facility with electric and gas welding equipment and lathe, darkroom, various air compressors four-point self-tensioning mooring capability.
Cargo:	Afterdeck can carry 150 tonnes of cargo & tie down points for containers – VERTREP only

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Ship's Badge



Both *Manawanui I & II* did not have a ship's badge when in commission. It was not until the third ship arrived in Auckland in 1988 that thought was given to a badge design. In mid 1989 the ship's company was asked to submit a design. The design was submitted in August 1989 and was refined by the Commodore Auckland's staff. The diving helmet was changed to match that of the branch badge of the diving branch. It was submitted to CNS in September 1989. It was not finalised until 1993 when the official drawings were completed and the badge formally approved by CNS on 14 July 1993.

Name: Maori for big heart

Motto: There is no official motto for the ship

Battle Honours: There are no battle honours associated with the name.

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Ship History:

There have been three vessels in RNZN service that have used the name *Manawanui*. The first vessel was a former USN harbour tug YTL622 that was built in Auckland at the end of the Second World War under a US Lend-lease scheme. She was not required by the USN with the end of the war and was kept by the Marine Department in Auckland. She operated with the department in 1946 and 1947 when she was laid up at the end of that year. The RNZN took the tug over on 20 October 1948 and commissioned her as *Manawanui* in November. She operated with the RNZN as a tug from 1948 to 1952. She then was converted to a diving tender and operated between 1953 and 1978.

The second *Manawanui* was built at the Whangarei Engineering and Construction and laid down on 8 December 1978. This was the lead-ship of an Inshore Patrol Craft type based on the 1970s RAN torpedo recovery vessel although it was built with a larger superstructure. It was completed on 23 May 1979 and was commissioned into RNZN service as the diving tender HMNZDT *Manawanui* on 28 May 1979. Under this name the ship served until 1988. It assisted the recovery efforts on the sunken Soviet liner *Mikhail Lermontov* in March 1986. By 1987 it was found not to be suitable for the expanded range of tasks of the Operational Diving Team [ODT]. With approval of the government *Manawanui* was sent from conversion to a training vessel in November and the RNZN began to look for a replacement. On 17 May 1988 the former *Manawanui* was recommissioned into RNZN service as HMNZS *Kahu* and handed to *Tamaki* as a training vessel.² In 1990 *Kahu* was part of the RNZN fleet present at the Waitangi Celebrations. *Kahu* was decommissioned in 2009.

Manawanui III

In March 1988 the RNZN purchased a larger diving tender due to the expansion of the ODT. This new vessel was commissioned into service as HMNZDT *Manawanui III*. Known as the *Star Perseus* and had been used as a diving support vessel for North Sea oil rigs. She was one of four vessels selected for close inspection and a RNZN evaluation team went to Britain in February 1988 to inspect her and she was accepted for RNZN service. The cost was \$1,600,000 which was \$400,000 less than budgeted. Combined with the Naval Hospital this vessel provided a wide range of civil services in addition to its prime function as diving tender, mine countermeasures, and underwater research. The vessel was fitted with a 250 feet compression chamber and a wet diving bell. Also fitted were a 13 tonne crane, a workshop which included electric and gas welding equipment and a lathe. There were also a photographic darkroom, air compressors, a self-tensioning mooring capability. The afterdeck can carry 150 tonnes of equipment if required.

Commissioning 1988³

Manawanui was docked in Dundee. The ship's company had come over in March and manned the ship on the 28th and began the hard task of cleaning up the ship after five months of being laid up. The project was under the control of Ocean Fleets Ltd. The ship's crane rescued a catamaran that was overloaded with truck tyres taken from the ship. The kiwi on the starboard funnel was reversed so it faced backwards. The ship went to sea for the first time for trial on 30th March. The commanding officer CDR D.N. Wood arrived on 3 April 1988 to assume command and led the ship's company in preparing for the commissioning.

Her Commissioning ceremony was held on 5 April 1988 at the Victoria Docks at Dundee. The service was conducted by Reverend J. O'Farrel and Reverend W.M.M. Campbell of the Royal Naval Reserve. Assistance to the ceremony was provided by HMS *Camperdown*

² *New Zealand Navy News* 14:1 (Autumn 1988), p. 11.

³ *Manawanui III* Report of Proceedings 6 April – 25 May 1988

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(Dundee RNVR Division). At the ceremony the ship was presented with a miniature brass and copper diving helmet from Ocean Fleets Ltd. This was a speedy project as only a few weeks lapsed between the selection of a diving support vessel, its purchase, transporting the ship's company, storing ship, sea trials and preparation for the return voyage to New Zealand. This was commented upon by the Royal Navy as an example of Kiwi can-do attitude. A kiwi was painted on the funnel facing aft.

The ship's company was listed in the commissioning booklet as follows:⁴

Commanding Officer:	Commander D.N. Wood
Executive Officer:	Lieutenant Commander G.C. Collier, MBE
Executive Officer [Desig]:	Lieutenant P.F Teagle
Supply Officer:	Lieutenant T.S. Quinn
Navigating Officer:	Lieutenant M.J. Riepen
WODI P.E.J. Kneebone, BEM	
WOMEA D.R. Ferguson	
CPODI C.P. Ropitini	
PORS P. Dawson	
LMM H.K. Heke	
LRF D.J. Rolfe	
LEL C.M. Waenga	
LSA P.K. Goldsmith	
LCK H.J. Turnbull	
ADR K.H. Harema	
ADR M.C. Apiti	
AMM W.F. McCreath	
Mr Ian Batts – 2 nd Engineer	

Manawanui departed Dundee for Portsmouth on 7 April 1988 and arrived there on the 9th. At Portsmouth further equipment was. She left Portsmouth the next day for a five day passage to Gibraltar. During this voyage “the usual issues with new ship found, compass and bow thruster needed repairs which were found to be serious” upon arrival. On the 18th the ship's company lost a soccer game to a team from HMS *Rooke* 6-1. She departed Gibraltar on the 19th for Port Said. While on passage there were issues with radio communications were discovered and ship's company spent time dealing with rust. It was discovered that spares

⁴ HMNZS MANAWANUI Commissioning Book, Tuesday 5th April 1988

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were at Cyprus and Singapore so she continued on to Port Said. The ship held its Anzac Day ceremony while close to Gallipoli and arrived at Port Said on the 27th.

On arrival at Port Said, she was swarmed over by local officials that the commanding officer concluded included the secret police, hawkers, pedlars, and the gully-gully man. It was noted that a lack of “gifts” to local officials from the RNZN ship was the source of some problems. Rat guards made out of a 44 gallon drum and a Suez canal light weighing 1.5 tonnes was wrestled into place by the ship’s company. In the ROP the commanding officer felt that some of the some of the confusion encountered by *Manawanui* was due to the fact that it:

- Was not painted as a man o’war
- Not been through the Suez Canal before
- Had no guns
- Did not hold the original documents for the ship
- No ship’s stamp
- Ship’s company were outnumbered by the Egyptian officials

Fortunately the commanding officer’s signature seemed to overcome anything but things were slow as it was Ramadan. The canal was entered at 0430 on 30 April in convoy and completed the transit in the afternoon and set sail for Cochin. While in passage on the Red Sea French naval vessels are encountered and one French Lynx came over to inspect. While on passage the port engine was shut down on May 9th as lubrication oil leaked into fresh water cooling system. The engineers had to use salt water from the fire main to cool the engine for inspection. Out of radio contact and making way on starboard engine at 7 knots the engine was repaired and contact with Auckland made. Ship did drills and maintenance and arrived in Cochin on the 14th. *Manawanui* remained at Cochin until the 17th and she was hosted by Indian navy. As she left port a cooling pipe for the port main engine burst when rust gave way and the ship returned to port and repairs made. The rest of the passage via Singapore was relatively uneventful. Her first landfall in New Zealand was at the Hole in the Wall in the Bay of Islands. *Manawanui* arrived for the first time at PHILOMEL on 26 June 1988 to begin her service. In October 1988 she departed for Lyttelton to enter the drydock for a refit and repaint to the RNZN standard grey colour scheme. She came out of the refit in December and returned to Auckland to begin her service in the RNZN fleet.

Into Service 1989

In January *Manawanui* made her first official port visit as a RNZN ship and visited Napier between the 18th and 22nd. In February she took part in the fleet concentration period and exercises with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). In June she was committed to Exercise GOLDEN FLEECE held off Napier with the RNZN’s ODT. This exercise was concerned with ordnance disposal and mine clearance in the approaches to the port. This was the first exercise she took part in as a commissioned diving tender. One of the Leading Divers discovered a floating dummy mine near the ship before it “struck”. In July major work was required. Poor preparation during the 1988 refit and unsympathetic upper-deck design created a perfect environment for corrosion. On the other hand the living quarters well designed and in good condition. The next month she was tasked with carrying out a survey of Second World War-era ordnance dumps west of Cuvier Island. In September another first was achieved when three working divers were successfully supplied by the one air system. Two divers descended to 23m on the ship’s low pressure diving system on the 17th which was a first for diving in the RNZN. The Diving Bell was operated successfully on the 18th. Another first this month was a dive to 30m at Gannet Rock by three members of the ODT using Helium/O2 equipment. In two weeks off Great Barrier, a number of firsts were set for the ODT and the RNZN. Also trialled were new clearance diving apparatus for use up to 55m

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on mines or explosive ordnance. On the last day of the month she lost the starboard after anchor when setting up for ODT training in 50m. It had broken off 50cm from the cable/anchor join. A search began on October 2nd but failures of kit prevented the anchor being found and it was replaced on the 6th.

In October *Manawanui* carried out a major joint exercise. While she had her anchor replaced diving equipment was removed and computers added for operations with the Army and the British Special Air Service [SAS]. She departed *Philomel* on the 9th and deployed the HX29 for a shelf noise trial with the frigate HMNZS *Southland* off Cuvier Island. Two DSE scientists who embarked carried out the trial on board. On passage to Wellington there were exercises with RNZAF Orions. Upon arrival in Wellington on the 12th, the Minister of Defence Bob Tizard visited and stated he was happy with the ship and its role as dive training, acoustic research, and support of covert Army operations. On the 15th Captain R.J. Eckford's daughter Miranda was christened aboard ship with the Chief of Naval Staff present.

On the 16th the four SAS troopers and the ODT embarked in Wellington. It was reported that the sight of "the southerly rollers and 50knot southerlies on departure...was enough for all four [SAS men] to wish the day had never happened and beat a hasty retreat to their bunks." The next day *Manawanui's* four zodiacs carried out recovery of airdropped supplies, boats and their crews. It took 30 minutes to safely recover men and boats except one boat that had drifted downwind and was recovered later. On the 19th she made passage in darkened condition off Stephens Island and embarked a reconnaissance party under the command of a United States Army captain in two boats. It was a difficult job in 3m swells close to the cliffs to avoid sighting by the opposition. The exercise went very well as the crane operator and dive deck crew learned very quickly to be effective. On the 20th the ship's company repaired zodiacs that the SAS had written off. One the next day she made passage to Matai bay to contribute to Exercise NORMANDY. This was a series of landing exercises with NZ Army/SAS teams in Nydia Sound. It was a difficult task as there many civilian boats present as it was Labour Weekend. On the 22nd a platoon of D Company, RNZIR was embarked at Nydia Bay for Exercise NORMANDY. At the rendezvous at Deep Bay, the platoon used four boats to carry out the landing exercise. The platoon was picked up at Harvey Bay. The presence of fully armed and camouflaged soldiers shocked the locals who had no idea the men were there. The exercise finished on the 23rd and the commanding officer noted that the "bearing, discipline, and general purposefulness of the troops was a pleasure to witness..." Another exercise was conducted SILVER ANVIL with the SAS. *Manawanui* picked up 22 paratroopers including the Squadron commander. While at anchor in the sheltered waters of Astrolabe Roads, the master of the fishing vessel *Physllie* asked for assistance after his vessel had sunk in 30m after striking rocks. With permission from Commodore Auckland [COMAUCK], a dive was undertaken and air bags were lent. The resulting good public relations was felt when the ship arrived in Nelson for a run ashore.

The last notable event for her first full year of service was to attend the *Cookfest* celebrations of Cook's arrival in Mercury Bay in November. *Manawanui* made her first official visit to Whitianga arriving on the 3rd. The ship helped in the re-enactment of Cook's arrival and a eight-man team won the tug o' war event. Over 800 people visited the ship while she was there on the 5th.

1990

Manawanui began the year with a great win when the last race was held for the Hawea Cup on Auckland Anniversary Day. The reason was that the RNZN was withdrawing the whalers and cutters from the fleet bringing to an end of 40 years of competition. The winning crew were: Lieutenant Nick Quinn, CPO Kevin Stinson, CPO Reg Martin, LRF Trevor Martingley,

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LDR Jeff Scrimgeour, and ADR Mark Simkins. In February the ship was part of the race cordon around the starting line for the leg of the Whitbread Round-the-World Race departing from Auckland. This was followed by her first visit to Waitangi for the celebrations with the ODT embarked for a security role. As 1990 marked the 150 anniversary of the signing of the Treaty, the RNZN had a 12-ship fleet present as HM Queen Elizabeth was also present to mark the ceremony. During the weekend the most important charter in the navy's possession was presented to the RNZN at Waitangi. The new Charter conferred on the RNZN '... the right and privilege, without further permission being obtained, of marching at all times with drums beating, bands playing, colours flying, bayonets fixed and swords drawn through the lands of the Tai Tokerau, especially the Treaty Grounds'. It cemented a relationship between the Navy and the Tai Tokerau which pre-dated nationhood. This honour bestowed upon the Navy also extended special privileges to naval visitors in the Far North.

Upon returning to Auckland, *Manawanui* was assigned in support of Project TIPA. She was fitted to lay 6km of cable for a noise range facility being developed off Great Barrier Island by a French company contracted to the RNZN. This work continued through into March which included the divers attaching hydrophones to the cable. Then she was alongside *Philomel* undertaking a communications refit. Coming out of the refit, the ODT conducted diving operations to 75m using helium/O2 mix [known as HELIOX] for the first time in June. In July there came a South Pacific Deployment. After a brief visit to the Norfolk Islands she arrived in Vanuatu on 27 July for the independence celebrations followed by an exercise. After visiting Vava'u, Tonga she returned to Auckland.

In October *Manawanui* set another first when she was deployed to the Southern Ocean. Departing from Dunedin, she embarked supplies and eleven personnel for Campbell Island. After spending three days anchored there she returned to Bluff. She took on twenty tonnes of caustic sludge, outdated food, and rubbish from the island. The commanding officer Lieutenant Commander Gordon Craig told *The Southland Times* the role was that of a "truck driver...we go down, we pick up and come back". Again in November she took part in Cookfest.

1991

The New Year began with another festival. After embarking COMAUCK, she visited Napier for the Blue Water South Pacific Festival and was starter for the yacht race. She returned to Napier in February for the rededication of the HMS *Veronica* Memorial upon the 60th Anniversary of the Hawkes Bay Earthquake. From Napier there was passage to Sydney and then to the RAN's Eastern Exercise Area at Jervis Bay NSW for minelaying and diving operations. In early March she assisted in a helicopter recovery operations off Piercy Island. In August the ship visited the Chatham Islands, a rare visit for the RNZN. As soon as she anchored, diving training was carried out and eight divers conducted "deep dive" exercise in freezing water into the dark. This was to make up for missed training due to bad weather. The Commanding Officer Lieutenant Kelvin Barrett and Leading Diver Brian Kino were photographed for a newspaper conducting a night dive. This visit was part of the RNZN's 50th Anniversary, a celebration of the granting of the title Royal New Zealand Navy on 1 October 1941. For Able Cook Michele Kiel, this was a homecoming. From the Chathams she went to Stewart Island arriving in early September. Also aboard at the time was a journalist from *The New Zealand Herald*. The ship's company painted the buildings of the DOC education centre at Horseshoe Bay and a wall that was difficult to reach at a local church. The ship demonstrated its capabilities and played a game of social netball. The ship then visited Wanganui and headed to Wellington for the fleet entry and spent a few days alongside as part of the 50th celebrations. The fleet then headed to the Bay of Islands where they rendezvoused with ships from the RAN in the Bay of Islands and then the fleet returned

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to Auckland for the formal events in Auckland to conclude the 50th commemorations. In November she was alongside Princess Wharf for the Americas Cup launch ceremony. She then returned to the Chatham Islands to participate in the Bicentennial Celebrations. This commemorated the arrival of Captain William R. Broughton on 29 November 1791 in command of HMS *Chatham* and named the islands after the then First Lord of the Admiralty.

1992

In February she departed Auckland for Sydney then on to the RAN exercise area at Jervis Bay. She spent a three weeks carrying out mine recovery operations before she returned to Auckland. Between April and July *Manawanui* undertook a survey of the Auckland minefields supported by the survey vessels HMNZS *Takapu*, *Tarapunga*, and the Inshore Patrol Craft HMNZS *Kahu* [formerly known as *Manawanui II*]. In September she embarked the CNS Rear Admiral Ian Hunter in Wellington and visited Dunedin. While there she embarked DOC personnel and two containers of supplies. From Dunedin she visited Auckland Islands to disembark some DOC personnel at Enderby Island. She then went to Campbell Island where more DOC personnel and supplies were offloaded. She then returned to Enderby Island to collect the DOC personnel and rabbits. After returning to Dunedin to offload the container and DOC personnel she offloaded the rabbits at the quarantine station in Somes Island.

1993

The first half of 1993 was spent carrying out training and testing of equipment in different locations around New Zealand. In June *Manawanui* was tasked with dealing with a legacy of the decision to dump ammunition at sea. After the end of the Second World War and up to the 1970s the RNZN participated in the dumping of ammunition at sea off the coast at various locations around New Zealand. There were a number of dumping areas in the Hauraki Gulf that were used. After 1945 the ammunition was dumped in shallow locations with no thought that in the future these could be very dangerous sites. She carried out a role known as explosive ordnance disposal [EOD] off Great Barrier Island. This had been a dumping site for ammunition in the post-1945 period. In July, she entered into refit for the rest of the year.

1994

Manawanui came out of refit and worked up to rejoin the fleet. In March she again departed Auckland for Sydney and then carried out minefield recovery operations at Jervis Bay with the RAN. She returned to Auckland via Whitianga in April. She carried out diving training in May and June. During this time one of the navy divers suffered decompression sickness. Between July and September *Manawanui* returned Rakitu Island next to Great Barrier Island to carry out more EOD. Over a period of six weeks, some 25 tonnes of ordnance was recovered safely. Some of the ammunition had come from the 4-inch guns issued to RNZN minesweepers in the Second World War. She was joined by HMNZS *Tarapunga* in August. In October she visited Gisborne for the 225th Anniversary of Cook's arrival in New Zealand and was visited while in port by the Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Welch. On October 12th she departed Auckland for a recovery mission involving a Squirrel helicopter that had crashed near the Hole in the Wall. She recovered the wreckage and returned to Auckland. She then returned to Whitianga in November and took part in the ceremony to unveil a new memorial for post-1945 service personnel.

1995

It was this year that the ship undertook a most unusual deployment and one that is unique in the history of the RNZN. Between 28th February and 2nd September the ship served a six month secondment to the RAN and the Australian Submarine Corporation based in Adelaide. *Manawanui* was to serve as a Submarine Rescue Vessel for trials of the first of the Collins-

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class submarines then being built in Adelaide. She spent two weeks alongside having submarine rescue equipment by the RAN. During this deployment she participated in Exercise BLACK CARILLON II. This was a simulated rescue of an entire submarine's crew. Out of 186 days deployed, 138 days were spent alongside. She worked with HMAS *Protector* and she carried some of the submarine escape rescue project during the trials. During exercise *Manawanui* would recover submarine "casualties" for assessment and treatment in recompression chambers. One highlight of working with the RAN was victory in touch rugby over the Australians. Members of the ship's company even turned out for a local rugby team playing in Adelaide. Upon completion of the deployment the Chief of Naval Staff, RAN sent a message:

I write to extend my personal appreciation for the efforts of the Commanding Officer and Ship's Company of HMNZS *Manawanui* in supporting Collins trials program. I appreciate that *Manawanui* has undertaken a demanding task over a protracted period far from home. I have been particularly impressed by the professionalism displayed throughout.⁵

In October, the ship was deployed for two weeks to Niue and carried out reef blasting to make channels in Alofi Harbour. Twelve divers also cleared underwater obstructions. This was described by the ship as her own Mururoa. At the same time HMNZS *Tui* was off Mururoa to protest the resumption of French underground nuclear testing. While there the ship also participated in the tiny nation's 21st independence celebrations. The ship carried out a flare demonstration which was the first time it had been seen in Niue. In November she supported scientific testing by the Defence Science Establishment.

1996

She began the year with working up and diving training. In April she carried out mine countermeasures shallow water training off Whitianga. This was followed in August by deployment overseas to Singapore. From August 5th to 30 September she took part in Exercise STARFISH 16/96 consisting of two 14-day exercises in the waters off Singapore and Malaysia. While in Singapore there was an unclassified message sent to the ship from the Maritime Commander about the recovery of the Coxswains' trousers! After departing Malaysia she returned to Fremantle where she supported further trials of the Collins-class submarines in Western Australia in October. She lost an anchor and spent time searching for it. Due to problems with the new submarine's sonar *Manawanui* was released from her deployment and returned to New Zealand. The RAN sent a message to the ship:

Throughout her time in Western Australia, *Manawanui* was responded admirably with great flexibility and commendable enthusiasm to the many changing trials requirements. In doing so she had consistently maintain high standards and demonstrated considerable professional pride in her work.⁶

1997

After entering a refit in March and coming out in May, *Manawanui* resumed operations. In late May she began a ROV survey of Great Barrier Island and ordnance disposal operations concluding in June. In August she carried out further ordnance recovery at the Hen & Chicken Islands. Between July and September she was in maintenance at *Philomel*.

The major deployment for *Manawanui* that would begin in December and end in April 1998 was Operation BELISI. This was an operation to support the truce that had been negotiated

⁵ Letter from CNS Rear Admiral Jack Welch to Officer Commanding *Manawanui* 6 September 1995.

⁶ Message to Commanding Officer *Manawanui* from RAN HQ 29 October 1996.

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between the PNG government and Bougainville which had been involved in a civil war which first broke out in 1989. New Zealand had been involved in negotiations as she was seen as an honest broker as opposed to Australia who had a colonial relationship with PNG. With the signing of the Burnham Declaration in July 1998, there was a path towards peace. A truce was negotiated and a monitoring team sent to Bougainville. One of her initial tasks was to survey and clear possible underwater obstructions of Loloho. On December 16th she anchored off Mamagata Beach and Maori performers from *Manawanui* and *Endeavour* went ashore to participate in a ceremony. During the deployment she would take the Truce Monitoring Team to areas accessible only by sea or outlying islands. Everywhere the New Zealanders went they came across the remains of the Second World War including bunkers, aircraft and guns.

1998

Using Loloho as a base of operations, she was at sea, carrying out beach surveys and salvage operations, supporting the Red Cross, and transporting stores in January and February. In a joint mission, Army and Navy divers attempted unsuccessfully to remove a small coastal ship that had been scuttled off Keita Wharf during the undeclared war on Bougainville. Things became tense with the local people as they were not aware of the purpose of the ship's presence. After being briefed by a Army officer tensions eased. In late February she returned to Cairns for a break from the mission and returned to Loloho in early March. In an example of naval cooperation, she refuelled from HMAS *Tobruk*. While alongside at Loloho on 8 April, the ship celebrated ten years of service in the RNZN with a Race Day. She departed Bougainville the next day and returned to Auckland. While on deployment the ship sent back to New Zealand a monthly newsletter and also sent video so that the loved ones of the ship's company would be able to see and understand what they were doing in Bougainville. With the ship's company at 23 officers and ratings, the Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Keith Robb took advantage to conduct a series of training for the whole ship. Lieutenant Commander Robb also stated his thoughts on operating in the Solomons:

Professional it has been a good deployment. It has been a very busy period and rewards from a ship command point of view as I have a fair bit of autonomy. Morale has general being good. There are some troughs, generally when there has been no mail delivery,. Because we are away so much we miss the mail drops so it can be another five days before it arrives at the ship.⁷

Notice the contrast between the state of communications in 1998 and later overseas deployments where the *Manawanui* and her ship's company remained connected back to home through emails and social media.

Upon her return, she entered into a maintenance and refit period. In August she once again deployed to the Far East. The Five Power Defence Arrangement integrated maritime and airborne exercise STARDEX 98 she had been scheduled to participate in was cancelled. She was sent to Singapore to carry out diving training with the Republic of Singapore and Royal Malaysian navies. While briefly in Darwin, a combined *Endeavour* and *Manawanui* team beat the RAN in rugby. On 24rd September she recovered the wreckage and body of the Observer from HMS *Grafton's* helicopter which had crashed into the sea during a night-time exercise. After departing the exercise she carried out dive training in the Tioman area, with the Malaysian navy. In late October she visited the RAN base at Darwin and took part in trials of equipment in the Timor Sea into November before she arrived back home via Cairns and Noumea.

⁷ *Navy Today* No. 21 *(April 1998), p. 35.

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1999

She began the year with diving workups and mine countermeasure operations. In March *Manawanui* returned to Bougainville and upon arrival assumed duties at CTG 627.9 replacing HMAS *Brunei*. As in the 1998 deployment the main task of the ship was to land personnel to get things working after years of neglect and damage. This ranged from such jobs as repairing the power supply and rebuilding the local school. She assisted the Peace Monitoring Group by visiting isolated communities and pass on news of the peace process and engage in a "hearts and minds campaign". Morale was high despite peace monitoring effort being alcohol free but the ships' company enjoyed beating the Australians at sport and being fed well by the chefs. She returned to Auckland in May. She underwent a Lloyds survey at *Philomel* in June and then into maintenance. In September she was part of the RNZN's support to the APEC Meeting held in Auckland. The next month she returned to Bougainville to convey supplies and transport patrols around the island. Due to poor charts of some parts of the coastline, the ship's company conducted surveys of the crocodile infested waters. She returned to Auckland via Brisbane in December.

2000

After two deployments overseas in 1999, this year would prove to be a quiet year. She conducted surveys for the Mine Countermeasures Office off New Plymouth and Wellington. In May *Manawanui* was prepared for another overseas deployment. In June she visited Ports Moresby and Darwin. While on the way to Darwin her port diesel engine began to fail and required a complete rebuild which took four weeks. This ended any chance of the ship participating in the naval exercises that year. She then returned back to Auckland. Between August and September she spent her time in maintenance. Coming out of maintenance she carried out diving training in Mercury Bay and the Hauraki Gulf.

2001-2002

Manawanui spent most of 2001 in New Zealand waters carrying out diving training and Exclusive Economic Zone patrols. She carried out seabed surveys off Lyttelton, Dunedin, Auckland and Whangarei. In February she was the start boat for the BT Challenge Yacht Race in Wellington and then took part in the boat show in the same city in March. Also In February she recovered a 19th century anchor in 30m of water south of Pencarrow Head during training with divers from Singapore. In May, she paid another visit to the Chatham Islands. In June she was taking part in Operation MACK off Cape Farewell. At the end of the month sailors from *Manawanui* boarded a Korean trawler in support of the Ministry of Fisheries and escorted it into Timaru for possible breaches of fisheries regulations.

In August she departed Auckland for fisheries patrols off the Northland Coast as part of Operation HOHONU. This meant boarding and inspecting New Zealand tuna boats operating north of Great Barrier Island. Sailors and Fisheries Officers carried out the inspections. It was the first operation carried out under the control of the Joint Forces NZ HQ. In September she left Auckland for Sydney. From there she was deployed to the Solomons as part of Operation RICHOCHET II between October and February 2002. She took over from the RAN vessel HMAS *Canberra*. The ship supported the International Peace Monitoring Team on Guadalcanal in the Solomons by carrying out patrols and other tasks as required. During that time elections were held and she played an important role in transporting election monitors and assisting the newly-formed government. The cultural group performed for the locals wherever the ship visited and got a warm and appreciative response in return. In November 2001 there was a dive made on the wreck of HMNZS *Moa* at Tulagi which had been sunk by Japanese aircraft in April 1943. Christmas 2001 was spent a resort in Marau Sound at the eastern end of Guadalcanal.

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In January 2002 *Manawanui* hosted aboard a feared warlord Harold Heke who met with the Solomons government. Sitting at a BBQ bench was conducted with pizza supplied by the chefs. The ship also visited isolated locations with the peace monitoring team. Upon returning to Auckland in February 2002 she went into maintenance. While in Whitianga for Anzac Day, she lost an anchor when the cable severed in rough weather. She carried out some diving training, officer-of-the-watch, and mine countermeasures exercises from May until the end of July. On 24 June she lost a second anchor off Great Barrier Island. In July as part of Exercise ORCA the ODT operated with the divers from the Singapore Navy. The next month she took part in Exercise BLACKADDER, a joint operation with the Army and then trained with Customs and the Police in company with HMNZS *Canterbury*. She then entered into a long period of maintenance concluding at the end of the year including being brought out of the water at Westhaven Basin in September and October. Coming out of her maintenance, the ship was assigned to support the Louis Vuitton Cup Challenger Series being held in the Hauraki Gulf. She served as a command and control platform for the race officials which also had the advantage of giving the ship's company a grandstand seat to the action on the water. The year closed with the Chief of Defence Force awarding the ship and the sailors a CDF Commendation for the service in the Solomon Islands supporting Operation RICOCHET II.

2003

The year began with support for HMNZS *Te Mana*'s deployment preparations by carrying out boarding drills. As the diving equipment had not been used since mid-2002, a lot of effort was spent in ensuring it all worked correctly. After participating in the Waitangi celebrations she departed Auckland in March with the ODT for an overseas deployment where she would take part in four major mine countermeasures exercises and would return in August. She first visited Port Villa after encountering Cyclone Erica and Manus Island in March. From there, she then visited Brunei in April and arrived in Singapore where she would be based until July. During the passage to Singapore, training was given in ship protection as there was a large number of pirate attacks in the areas she was passing through. Between May and July she undertook diving exercises and took part in Exercise BILAT and Exercise FLYING FISH 03 in Singapore and Malaysia. Units from Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, United Kingdom and New Zealand participated in this Five Power Defence Arrangements [FPDA] exercise which involved multi-threat scenarios centred on the protection of the Malaysian peninsula and was focused on multinational naval interoperability. During the exercises Malaysian and Singaporean divers operated on *Manawanui* side by side with the ODT as the three navies tested their interoperability. The ship was the first RNZN vessel to visit Lumut in Malaysia in a decade and the first time direct deployment of *Manawanui* to Malaysia for BILAT. The sailors also managed to retain the Perth Cup awarded for sports between the FPDA forces for the sixth year in a row. She returned back to Auckland on 4 August. At the end of September she became the duty SAR for the RNZN. In October she took part in Exercise BARRIER 03 a multiagency exercise alongside *Canterbury*. Sailors from the ship took part in such activities as pretending to be illegal immigrants arriving by sea. While this was going on, the show *Boarder Patrol* filmed the "actors" at work. After a very busy year the ship spent the last two months in maintenance and training.

2004-2005

After carrying out training with the RNZNVR inshore patrol craft in January [known as SQUADDEX], *Manawanui* began her year as the Guard Ship at Waitangi in February. The next month she carried out fisheries protection as part of Operation HUDSON off Northland, Bay of Islands and New Plymouth. A fishing vessel *Seamount Explorer* was found to be fishing illegally off the west coast of the North Island and had to be pursued by *Manawanui*

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until she was successfully boarded on the morning of 11 March. The vessel sent to Auckland where its catch was sized. During this one operation, 49 vessels were investigated by Customs officers embarked and sixteen fishing vessels inspected, eight of which were found to be breaking regulations. In May she began another overseas deployment heading to Tonga, Western Samoa and New Caledonia. While at the latter, she berthed at the French naval base and took part in a French, New Zealand and Australian naval exercise known as CROIX DU SUD [Southern Cross] in June and returned home at the end of the month. On her return she supported trials by the Defence Technology Agency and underwent maintenance in August and September. October she supported a New Zealand Customs and Ministry of Fisheries operation off the east and west coasts of the North Island. She made a very rare visit to Manukau and came alongside at Onehunga. At the end of October she located the wreck of the fishing vessel *Iron Maiden* which had sunk southwest of Cape Reinga using her ROV.

2005 was a quiet year for the ship. In February she took part in the joint RAN/RNZN exercise TASMEX 05 with the ODT embarked. She carried out diving training, customs operations fisheries, and mine countermeasures training but spent most of her time in Auckland. In April she assisted the Maritime Safety Authority to recover 23 toxic pods off the Poor Knights Islands. In May she did a resupply run to Raoul Island in the Kermadecs. In August she entered the drydock for two months. Upon coming out she carried out Operation ORION off Tauranga and made a home port visit to Whitianga in December.

2006-2008

After a quiet period in the first half of the year, she went south and carried out EEZ patrols out of Wellington and Lyttelton in August. In September she visited Sydney and the next month took part in Exercise DUGONG. This four week exercise was concerned with mine warfare and mine clearance and was held at the port of Gladstone in Queensland. Upon returning to New Zealand she visited Bluff and took supplies to the Auckland Islands known as Operation ENDURANCE before returning to Auckland. In 2007 her activities were much the same with the ship committed to diving training and EEZ patrols. She carried out some survey operations off Tauranga, Whitianga and Whangarei and in October made her second visit for a RNZN vessel to the Chatham Islands while on EEZ patrols. Most of 2008 was spent in the Auckland area with a commitment to training in diving operations, mine countermeasures and seamanship training for the sailors of the RNZN. In January 2008 the ship's company was awarded the W.J. Smith Trophy during the Fleet Divisions. This was awarded for the valuable contribution the other units of the RNZN make in support of the Naval Combat Force.

2009-2011

The ship spent most of 2009 undertaking harbour training, officer-of-the-watch instruction, diving training, and EEZ patrols. In June and July she took part in Exercise TRIDENT WARRIOR off Great Barrier Island with HMNZS KAHU. This was a very unique type of exercise that the RNZN took part in. Combined with exercises being simultaneously carried out by the United States Navy in the Atlantic, *Manawanui* was fitted with equipment to test communications for interoperability purposes. Engineers from America, Canada, and Australia. In August she visited Tonga and took part in Operation NOMUKA. In November she deployed to New Caledonia and undertook a Lagoon Mine Exercise off Noumea.

2010 began very quietly. She took part in Operation BUSHNELL and ORION out of Lyttelton and Wellington and carried out EEZ patrols. In July she supported the ODT Reunion at Opuia and supported a dive of the Rainbow Warrior. On her return to Auckland she entered into drydock and was alongside until the end of September when she returned to sea to workup

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and return to duty, In December she supported the Patrol Fleet entry into Auckland – this was the first group entry of the new inshore and offshore patrol vessels delivered to the RNZN under Project Protector.

Between January and May 2011 the ship carried out training. In June she participated again in that year's TRIDENT WARRIOR. More training periods followed. In October a detachment was sent from the ship to participate in the 70th Anniversary of the RNZN celebrations but the ship itself did not participate. She also supported RNZN operations off Tauranga following the grounding of the container ship RENA. The ship ended the year on high note when she was the winner of Top Ship of Sports tabloid event at the Champion of the Navy.

2012

In February she sailed in support of the Defence Force sponsored *Operation Hero* television programme. Following a two point anchorage, she rendezvoused with boats from *Philomel*, the television crew, and the six children off Army Bay, Whangaparaoa. The ship was expected to provide the military platform for the children to enter the water from, prior to commencing their swim to Army Bay. Although a relatively brief effort, the need to maintain a military unit in camera shot throughout the swim and further beach activities, meant that it was a long day for the sailors.⁸ In April she was involved in the Whitianga and Martarangi ANZAC commemorations. All the ship's company were justifiably proud and certainly came back more unified than prior to departure.⁹ From July to October she carried out training including officer-of-the-watch courses. On 24 September 2012 *Manawanui* was called into assist when a Fuller's ferry enroute to Whangaparaoa suffered a fire in the Rangitoto Channel with 63 persons aboard. Along with the Police Launch *Deodar* the ferry was escorted to Gulf Harbour. In November she entered the drydock for maintenance and came out in December.

2013

In April the private aircraft of the CEO of 2Degrees crashed in the sea off Raglan. *Manawanui* was deployed to assist in the recovery of the wreckage and bodies. Known as Operation POSIDEON it was a very difficult and dangerous task for the navy divers. One of the ODT personnel had to be evacuated by rescue helicopter.

In June, she returned to the Solomons via Noumea but this time it was not a peace mission. Due to the legacy of the Second World War that was fought ferociously between Allied and Japanese forces there is a large amount of ordnance that requires disposal. Known as Operation PUKAURUA, the personnel from *Manawanui* carried out explosive ordnance operations with United States Navy personnel at Rendova, Munda, and Sasavele Channel. She then went to Kiribati and carried out EOD operations at Betio [Tarawa], the site of Operation GALVANIC, the American landings in November 1943 and the three day brutal battle to liberate the islands from Japanese control. This was carried out under the Pacific Partnership. This is a multinational operation organised to carry out peacetime tasks in the Pacific which nations commit armed forces to complete selected tasks in the island nations of the Pacific. On her return to Auckland the ship carried out training exercises to the end of the year.

2014

Between February and March the RNZN hosted the Western Pacific Naval Symposium Maritime Counter Measures and Diving Exercise. *Manawanui* was deployed on the exercises with the ODT, *Canterbury* and the Republic of Korea navy. This was a major multinational

⁸ *Manawanui's* ROP February 2012.

⁹ *Manawanui's* ROP April 2012.

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naval exercise held regularly for navies to brush up their skills in mine warfare. Divers exercised together in clearing mines and diving operations. In July hosted a visit by the Commander in Chief of the United States Navy 7th Fleet VADM Robert L. Thomas and then went to Wellington to support the RNZN Littoral Operational Support Capability project. She spent the rest of the year in training operations in New Zealand waters. In November, she helped search for a missing boy off Mount Manganui and also carried out SAR operation off Kawau Island as command platform

2015

In February she carried out Exercise NAUTILUS with the ODT as dive platform. The next month she provided support for Exercise ACME with the RNZN Littoral Warfare Support Force on Great Barrier Island. In April, as the nation celebrated the centenary of the landings at Gallipoli, she was present at Whitianga for the town's commemorations. In July she entered a major maintenance period at Whangarei. At the end of August she carried out a resupply mission to Raoul Island [Operation HAVRE]. In November she took part in Exercise SOUTHERN KATIPO. This is a major multinational exercise carried out in New Zealand waters with units from the RNZN, Army, RNZAF and overseas forces.

2016

In February she assisted the ODT in a search and rescue operation in Tauranga. In March she visited Gisborne as part of RNZN's 75th anniversary celebrations. In April she commemorated her penultimate Anzac Day at Whitianga and hosted over 1100 visitors. She spent all of May, June and July alongside at *Philomel*. In August she returned to operations as she prepared for overseas deployment. At the end of the month she departed Auckland for the Solomons. During September and the early part of October *Manawanui* was part of the group deployed for Operation RENDER SAFE. This was a multinational operation led by the Australian Defence Force to dispose safely of unexploded munitions. Her sailors and divers were again working to clear the dangerous legacy of the Second World War. In the first week of the RENDER SAFE operation, the combined multinational teams recovered 1389 items, weighing 3.7 tonnes, of unexploded ordnance. The team of divers from *Manawanui* and explosive ordnance disposal experts from the Canadian Defence Force recovered and detonated safely about sixty unexploded munitions, including a 250-pound bomb, during the operation.¹⁰

Able Diver Craig Smith part of the ship's company of *Manawanui* commented in a RNZN media release on the operation:

It's been fantastic to help them out and they are also our main source of information...the he Solomon Islanders have been living in an area scattered with tonnes of explosive ordnance for the past seven decades...removing these hazards will give them a safe environment to live in and the kids will be able to jump in the water without being afraid of injuring or killing themselves.¹¹

This was *Manawanui's* last overseas deployment while in service with the RNZN. In October and November she joined with the rest of the fleet to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the granting of the title Royal New Zealand Navy on 1 October 1941.

2017

Manawanui's last full year in commission began with the usual training duties. She took part in Exercise FULCRUM at Bland Bay, Whangaruru. This was a multinational mine clearance

¹⁰ RNZN media release 4 October 2016

¹¹ RNZN media release 4 October 2016

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operation as the divers searched for dummy mines laid by the ship in the bay or they used ROV to hunt for the mines remotely. In March, the RNZN ceased diving activities using the ship and her role now became a training vessel for officer-of-the-watch courses as our junior officers gained their watchkeeping qualifications. In April she visited her home port of Whitianga for the last time the ship's company would commemorate Anzac Day in the town. In June a new ship's coin was struck and minted. She then returned to a routine of training through to September. From mid October to the end of November she took part in her last major exercise SOUTHERN KATIPO. This was a major multinational combined forces exercise with units from thirteen countries participating. The purpose was to test and evaluate the NZDF's expeditionary capability and different types of deployment that our forces face. In one scenario, *Manawanui* played the role of a ship running drugs and arms which the ship's company fully embracing their roles as desperadoes. She was hunted in the Marlborough sounds by HMNZS *Wellington* and a RNZAF Orion. In November the ship also conducted a series of farewell visits to ports on the North Island's east coast. The Chief of Navy Rear Admiral John Martin met with the ship's company and told them that it was "sad to say goodbye to an old friend."

The Decision to Decommission

In the past few years the RNZN's fleet has been undergoing a transformation as the navy looks to meet its commitments in the 21st century. With the decommissioning of the survey vessel HMNZS *Resolution* in 2012, the fate of *Manawanui* began to be considered. The RNZN addressed the matter of the future of *Manawanui* in a project document in September 2017. The Disposal Project Charter stated that:

1. MAN is now facing obsolescence issues related to her age and design which require additional management and funding to address. A Critical Systems Review and Impact of Potential Life Extension was conducted to identify MANs systems that were identified as either needing to be addressed or closely monitored, to ensure it can operate effectively through to 2018. This review highlighted that operating MAN beyond 2018 was not a viable option because:
 - a. MAN faces increasing equipment obsolescence, and an increasing lack of supportability, which may compromise the vessel's operational management systems and availability.
 - b. The probability of systems failures will become 'acute' and any resultant repairs are likely to be more frequent, last longer and become increasingly complex.
 - c. Upgrading these critical and other at risk systems to enable efficient operation past 2018 would require additional capital investment.¹²

Manawanui made her last home port visit and last port visit as a commissioned vessel in the RNZN to Whitianga from 31 January to 5 February. On 1 February a parade was held with the RNZN Band in attendance. As there was not a charter held by the ship, the Mayor of the town took the salute in a formal acknowledgement of the end of the connection between ship and town. The next day was given over to community service by the ship's company. On the 3rd the ship's company challenged the local volunteer fire brigade to the Fire Brigade Challenge. She departed for Auckland for the final time on the 5th ending her active service in the RNZN.

On February 9th 2018 *Manawanui* conducted a formal entry to Auckland with her 12 metre long decommissioning pennant. This is a naval tradition for ships being decommissioned

¹² HMNZS *Manawanui* Disposal Project Charter – Project document published 25 September 2017, p. 6.

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from the navy and the RNZN honours this tradition with the ships that serve in our fleet. On February 23rd the formal decommissioning was held at *Philomel* ending thirty years of sterling service to our navy.

Manawanui has served the nation and the RNZN faithfully for 30 years. During her service she has achieved many firsts for military diving in the RNZN, assisted in RNZN's role as a peacekeeper in the Pacific, represented the RNZN in multinational exercises, and has met any task that has been given to her. The future of diving and mine clearance operations will be met by a proposed ship that will combine hydrographic surveying capability and diving support. The new ship is expected to enter service in 2020. That new ship will carry on the legacy left behind by this proud ship and all who served in her.



Commander Muzz Kennett with Bill Felon on the bridge of MANWANUI at the handover 2 July 2018

Post-RNZN service: ¹³

As the RNZN's dive tender, *Manawanui* was instrumental in clearing the southern Pacific waters of unexploded ordnance left over from the Second World War. On 2 July 2018 she passed into the hands of Australia's Major Projects Foundation. They will use the ship, renamed *MV Recovery*, to carry out research into the extent of fuel leakage and corrosion from wartime shipwrecks, mainly in Melanesia. Mr Adams, the new ship's master Bill Felon and a 15-strong volunteer Australian crew presented themselves for the handover at PHILOMEL. In a short ceremony, NZDF Programme Director Fleet Disposals Chris Calvert passed Adams the ownership papers and bill of sale, while her last RNZN Commanding Officer Commander Muzz Kennett and new master Mr Felon exchanged a *Manawanui* cap and Major Projects T-shirt. "I could not have picked a better outcome for her," said Commander Kennett, who spent much of the handover in a captain-to-captain chat about the ship's capabilities and features with Mr Felon. "I think it's a fantastic outcome, in a sense

¹³ NZDF Media release July 2018.

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carrying on the work we have been doing,” Commander Kennett said. “There was talk of Manawanui becoming a dive attraction, but this is better — she will continue to do a highly valued role on the sea, as opposed to being a permanent feature under it.”

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