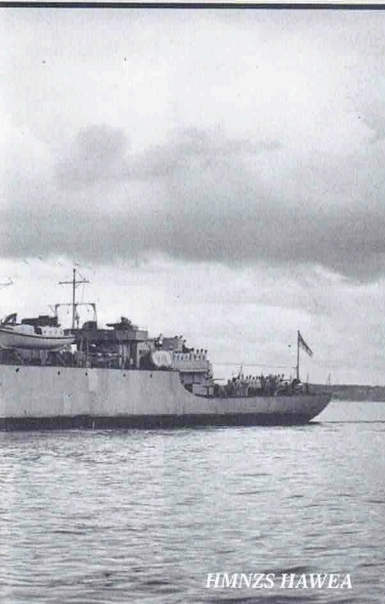


## PETER MAITLAND



HMNZS HAWEA



HMNZS ROYALIST

This worked, and after being stuck on the reef for almost 20 minutes, the ship slid free. The signal that was sent to the New Zealand Naval Board informing them of our mishap read, "Regret to inform you that the ship took the ground this day at Funafuti. An investigation is being carried out".

After dry dock and a refit HAWEA did two cruises around New Zealand, stopping at several ports and cities as well as a visit to Milford Sound and a few days at the Chatham Islands, as well as a week in Hobart and a couple of visits to Sydney.

I then spent time at PHILOMEL and did casual trips in HMNZS KIWI and the diving tender MANAWANUI. On KIWI I made a trip to Fiji in company with HAWEA and a Royal Navy submarine to exercise with the RNZAF, who had a large base on Fiji, flying Sunderland flying boats. En route to Fiji the submarine was recalled to Singapore, its home base, and HAWEA and KIWI were left with no one to play with. Once again we got sent on a goodwill cruise around the Fiji Islands visiting several places including Levuka, the old capital of Fiji and Leper Colony, before returning to New Zealand.

On the return voyage we encountered seas so rough that we were not allowed on the upper deck as the ship spent more time under water than above. We had lots of water sloshing around the mess deck and had no cooked food for three days as the Galley was on the upper deck, so we were forced to survive on "Ships Biscuits", which were pretty horrible. During this very rough weather, KIWI

was rolling up to 48 degrees either side of vertical, (there was a curved spirit level on the Compass Binnacle which we watched), as well as pitching and tossing around. KIWI had a 52-degree safety roll so there was not much margin for safety left. Standing was impossible without hanging on, and to add insult to our woes, HAWEA, who was much larger and weathering the conditions better, kept sending us nasty signals such as, "The inside of your funnel is disgracefully dirty" and "Your bottom is in much need of a good scraping". On speaking to crew members from HAWEA on return, they assured us that at times, because we were rolling so much, they could actually see down our funnel and observe our very dirty bottom.

After postings at HMNZS IRIRANGI and HMNZS WAKEFIELD in Wellington I was sent back to Auckland to join HMNZS ROYALIST, which had recently arrived from the UK after the New Zealand Government had bought her, much against the wishes of the Navy. But the politicians hold the purse strings and New Zealand was still very much tied to doing things for the benefit of England. ROYALIST had been in mothballs for several years, and was due for scrapping before the politicians got a brilliant idea, spend eight million pounds on a refit in Ireland before she became the flagship of the RNZN.

ROYALIST sailed from Auckland for a 12-month commission to the Far East. Working up exercises were done out of Sydney before leaving for Singapore for a short stay, then on to

Hong Kong. For the next 12 months the ship visited Singapore several times, Penang, in Malaya for their "Merdeka" celebrations, Yokosuka, Kobe and Sasebo in Japan, sailing through the Inland Sea. We saw Hiroshima when we sailed close by. In Korea we visited Pusan, Inchon and Paengyong-do, which is just short of the 38th parallel. We were in and out of Hong Kong as it was our home base at that time.

A couple of interesting facts. We were never issued with life jackets or protective clothing. My emergency station in HAWEA was a "Floatanet", which was a large type of fishing net with cork floats all over it. All it would have done was at best keep anyone afloat, if you could manage to hang on, but you would still be in the water and chances of survival would have been rather slim. Once, I and another junior Telegraphist were sent up the Main Mast on HAWEA whilst in harbour, to check the wire splicing of the antennas. There was no safety equipment at all, we were told to climb the mast and crawl out on the yardarm to do the checking. Both of us were absolutely terrified and I was never so glad to get my feet back on the deck.

The Navy provided a very different life to anything else and I do not regret my time in the Navy at all, in fact, I can remember more about my service than the rest of my life put together.