

# THE BUGLE

ISSUE 276  
DECEMBER 2020

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The Deployment Newsletter is produced for families and service personnel associated with current overseas deployments



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### Deadline

The deadline for Edition 277 is **8 January 2021**

Bugle contributions are welcome and should be sent to Carol Voyce.

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### Disclaimer

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### Cover Photo:

SSGT Sarah Buchanan, Op TROY, preparing for Christmas abroad.

# CHRISTMAS MESSAGES FROM ....

## AIR MARSHAL Kevin Short Chief of Defence Force



**T**his has been a unique year for the New Zealand Defence Force.

While we have continued with our usual overseas deployments, we have also faced at home a unique challenge in the COVID-19 pandemic.

This virus has impacted the whole world, and New Zealand has been lucky so far to have escaped much of the impact that has been, and is being, felt in other countries.

Those of you overseas will be aware of the impact on the country you are deployed to.

But it has also affected personnel back here, both in how the organisation has responded to its own imperative to protect the health of its people, and in the contribution to the All-of-Government response to COVID-19.

The commitment to the Government response has grown over this year and now involves around 1200 personnel at any one time supporting, or standing by to support, COVID-19 response activities at the Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities, regional command centres, and HQs.

It is now one of our largest "deployments" -- despite being within our borders.

This Christmas, as well as our deployed personnel overseas, others will be deployed to the MIQFs as we help keep New Zealanders safe and healthy.

I want to express my gratitude for the contribution and sacrifice made by all members of our Defence Force, but especially by the families of our deployed people. Our success as a Defence Force is inextricably linked to the ongoing support and understanding of families. What you do is highly valued by both the NZDF and the country.

I do wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.



## REAR ADMIRAL David Proctor Chief of Navy



*Meri Kirihimete kotou!*

**A**s if being deployed overseas in the service of your country is not challenging enough, the ongoing threat of COVID-19 would certainly have placed another layer of uncertainty and stress on you and your family. And while we are thankful for New Zealand's place in the world and the way our country has managed the COVID-19 response; we remain mindful of the COVID-19 challenges other countries still face, including those where many of you are deployed.

*Now more than ever, I offer my sincere thanks for the role you are performing overseas for New Zealand. My gratitude also to your whanau for the way they support you and NZDF's international efforts in these most challenging of times. Where possible rest and recuperate from the stresses brought on by this year.*

*I wish you a very Merry Christmas with your comrades and shipmates no matter where you are in the world. You make us all proud and our best wishes go out to you and your family.*

*Nga mihi o te Tau Hou ki a koutou katoa - Wishing you all a very Happy New Year.*



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# 2020 CHRISTMAS MESSAGES FROM ....



**MAJGEN John Boswell**  
**Chief of Army**

**2020** *is the year that challenged us in*

*ways that nobody saw coming. When the year kicked off we were well positioned to deliver on many of the initiatives from the Army25 strategy – our roadmap to becoming a modern, agile, highly adaptive, light combat force was gaining real momentum. The year was shaping up to be a busy one that would build on the successes of 2019.*

*Then, in January 2020, we heard about what was then called 2019-nCoV, the first case was found outside of its point of origin, and the WHO declared a global health emergency. In February, we started seeing restricted entry at our borders, and on March 24 – the day we were set to celebrate our Army's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a ceremony at the National War Memorial in Wellington - our country went into lockdown.*

*In a few short weeks, Covid-19 changed our landscape, we were shortly called upon to lend our support and, I am proud to say, we leaned in to the challenge quickly and with professionalism.*

*While our response to this global pandemic has been a large focus for us, it's important to recognise our Army serving overseas. Each of you deployed have represented our Army and our country with professionalism and dedication – and I am grateful that you continue to represent Ngāti Tūmatauenga and what we stand for on the world stage.*

*I wish each of you the very best this Christmas season. While you may be away from your families, you will not be far from their thoughts, and those of the rest of NZ Army.*

*Stay safe – we will see you back home soon. Merry Christmas team.*





## AIR VICE-MARSHAL Andrew Clark Chief of Air Force



**O**n behalf of the RNZAF I would like to wish our deployed personnel and their families a merry Christmas.

*This time last year, none of us could have predicted the challenges 2020 would bring. New Zealand has fortunately remained relatively protected from large scale Covid-19 disruption, but the same cannot be said for many of the places where our people are currently serving. I want you to know that back here at home we are very proud of what you are doing under tough conditions.*

*Wherever you were during this remarkable year, and whatever your contribution, I want to thank you for your commitment, leadership and agility. This year our people really stepped up in the midst of a lot of uncertainty and delivered great outcomes for the RNZAF and the NZDF. A special thanks goes to our families for your own resilience and support in difficult conditions, both here and overseas, with and without your loved ones.*

*It would be unwise of me to make predictions about 2021, but whatever it brings we have the team to handle it.*

*Thank you to you all and to all families.  
Merry Christmas.*



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# 2020 CHRISTMAS MESSAGES FROM ....



**REAR ADMIRAL Jim Gilmour  
Commander  
Joint Forces New Zealand**

**A**t Christmas this year, NZDF personnel will be serving their country overseas in places as diverse as South Sudan, Jordan, Afghanistan and South Korea. Many hundreds more will also be away from home - protecting the border here in New Zealand.

*Given the success of New Zealand's collective response to COVID-19, it could be easy to lose sight of the scale and dangers of the global pandemic. Yet the importance of the work we're doing to preserve our way of life should not be understated. 2020 has been a challenging year, but the NZDF has adapted quickly and operations continue, here, in the Pacific, and around the world.*

*To all of our personnel serving away from home this Christmas, whether that be in New Zealand or overseas, thank you for your efforts. You should be proud of your service to the country and the difference you are making to the lives of others.*

*I also want to thank the families of those deployed. The absence of loved ones can be hard at the best of times, this year has brought additional uncertainty and lengthened deployments.*

*Stay safe and stay strong. I wish you all a happy Christmas and thank you again for your commitment and hard work.*



COLONEL Stefan Michie, DSD  
Commander  
1<sup>st</sup> (New Zealand) Brigade



### 1 (New Zealand) Brigade



WO1 Ray Kareko  
Command Sergeant Major  
1<sup>st</sup> (New Zealand) Brigade

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, rau rangatiratanga mā, tēnā tātou katoa.

As the New Zealand public begins the holiday season, it would be remiss of us not to take a pause and remember our remarkable men and women of our armed forces who serve so courageously and so selflessly. This has been an extraordinary year for our nation. The effect of COVID-19 has thrust our world into havoc and turmoil, yet through it all, our soldiers have still deployed domestically and internationally keeping our country and its citizens safe.

It is an honour and privilege to serve alongside all our warfighters, families, and civilians who protect and defend our nation every day—we're proud of who you are, what you do, and what you represent.

Meri kirihimete me te tau hou ngā hōia o te Pirikēti Tuatahi o Aotearoa

Kia rite kia takatū—Ready to Act





## 16th Field Regiment



To fellow Gunners currently deployed, we appreciate your efforts and the sacrifices you have made in serving your country abroad and at home for Op PROTECT. Your service and commitment to the NZ Army and wider NZDF community is very much appreciated. The Regiment is proud of your commitment and look forward to your safe return home.

To the families of those deployed, being apart from your loved ones during this time of year is never easy and we thank you for the continued support and the efforts made by you to allow your loved ones to perform their duties.

On behalf of all ranks of 16th Field Regiment we would like to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Nga mihi o te Kirihimete me te Tau Hou

“UBIQUE”

**LTCOL Kristian Dunne**  
Commanding Officer

**WO1 Heath Southcombe**  
Regimental Sergeant Major

## Queen Alexandra’s Mounted Rifles



On behalf of all ranks of Queen Alexandra’s Mounted Rifles, we wish those deployed and their families and loved ones back home, a safe Christmas season. We appreciate your efforts and acknowledge the difficulties that separation from loved ones causes, especially during the holiday period.

Know that the unit is here to provide whatever support we can. We look forward to welcoming you back in a few months time.

*Ake Ake Kia Kaha ('Forever and ever, be strong').*

**LTCOL Edward Crow**  
Commanding Officer

**WO1 Mark Thompson** (outgoing)  
**WO1 Shannon Brears** (incoming)  
Regimental Sergeant Major





## 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Regiment



To all Sappers serving abroad over this festive season, thank you for your commitment, professionalism and selfless service to the NZDF and New Zealand. It has been a very challenging year for all of us on account of COVID-19, and none more so than for our people deployed on operations and their families back home. Our missions overseas continue in spite of the pandemic, and in many cases you will no doubt be helping those who are less fortunate than us – this remains noble and important work. I hope that wherever you are deployed, you are able to take some time over the Christmas period to speak with your family and share some of your experiences. It is a particularly challenging time of the year to be apart. I also hope that you are able to spend time as a contingent with fellow Kiwis, and hopefully open a few pressies from home.

We all wish you well for the remainder of your tour – Merry Christmas, stay safe, keep up the great work, and we look forward to seeing you back in New Zealand soon.

*Whaia to kaupukaha, I nga wahi katoa – Follow the Sapper*

**LTCOL Ian Brandon**  
Commanding Officer

**WO1 Brendon McDonald**  
Regimental Sergeant Major

## 1st Command Support Regiment

On behalf of the Commanding Officer, Regimental Sergeant Major, Officers, Soldiers and Civilian Staff of 1<sup>st</sup> Command Support Regiment we would like to extend our best wishes to all our NZDF personnel who are currently deployed on operations throughout the world during the Christmas and New Year period.

Serving on operations is not easy during this time of year for both the personnel deployed and their whanau and friends back in New Zealand. We would also like to acknowledge the families and friends of deployed personnel and wish them a very Merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

Our thoughts are with you all during this time and we look forward to seeing you all in 2021.

Nga mihi o te Kirihimete me te Tau Hou

**Lieutenant Colonel Jared McGregor**  
Commanding Officer



**WO1 Noema Kopa**  
Regimental Sergeant Major

# 1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment



Tena Koutou

On behalf of 1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We would like to express our gratitude to all our NZDF brothers and sisters serving on operations around the world. We also acknowledge those protecting our borders from within New Zealand as part of Operation Protect. This year has been extremely challenging, one out of the box given the Global Pandemic which is upon us. The very reason we are safe and have the freedom that we do is in no small part because of your actions, your commitment, your ethos and values but also because you are just being bloody good citizens doing what is right for New Zealand in difficult times.

It is challenging not being able to be at home with loved ones over the Festive Season. Being apart at any time is tough, but particularly stressful during this time of the year. Your service and commitment to the NZ Army and wider NZDF community is very much appreciated and doesn't go unnoticed. All our collective thoughts are with each and every one of you at this time no matter where you are, or what you may be doing. We commend your valuable contribution to the greater good and you all should be proud. Stay safe and we look forward to seeing you back in your home locations at the completion of, or in between your missions.

E Tū Tika (stand tall)  
E Tū Kaha (stand strong)  
E Tu Nga Toa (stand united as warriors)

ONWARD

**LTCOL Anthony Childs, DSD**  
Commanding Officer

**WO1 Chad Hally, DSD**  
Regimental Sergeant Major

# 2nd /1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment



Tena Koutou

Seasons greetings to all our soldiers and officers that are serving on operations away from New Zealand and their whanau at home over the Christmas holiday period. On behalf of all members of the 2nd/1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment, we wish you all the very best. Serving our Country, particularly at this time of the year, highlights the sacrifice made by our soldiers and moreover your families, who will be ringing in the New Year without you. You are in our thoughts, especially in this current COVID climate, where the risk to you individually may be higher than for us all at home.

Equally, to our soldiers and officers serving our country at home this holiday season, just like our brothers and sisters offshore, your contribution to the security of our nation, community and families is also significant. I hope that all of you are able to enjoy time with your whanau, friends and loved ones. Relish this where possible, as we all know, the demands of the organisation can at times create tension, especially at home and I encourage all of you to maintain good lines of communication.

Christmas is about family and serving away from those we care about at this time is never easy. Still, no matter where you serve in a hotel in Auckland and Christchurch or overseas, you can be assured that your service and sacrifice contributes to creating an environment so that all New Zealanders may enjoy the freedom to get together this holiday period.

To all who serve in our great unit, look after yourself, look after your whanau and we will see you safely back at Frickleton Lines in 2021.

*"Kura Takahi Puni."*

**LTCOL Cory Neale**  
Commanding Officer

**WO1 John Cantwell**  
Regimental Sergeant Major



## 2nd Combat Service Support Battalion



Kia ora koutou

On behalf of all ranks of 2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Service Support Battalion, we wish all those on operations off shore and here in Aotearoa a Meri Kirihimete. It has been an odd year – supporting a significant operation at home, adapting methods to enable training to continue in the new environment, and continuing to support garrison tasks. At the same time we have had service personnel deployed offshore in Sinai, Lebanon, South Korea, South Sudan, and a couple of attachments to Op Antarctica – these personnel have had deployments extended or changed to conform with new COVID protocols.

As service personnel, we consider ourselves adaptable – rolling with the changes – but we can forget the impact that such uncertainties have on our families and friends. We would like to thank the families and friends of our deployed personnel for their unwavering support and resilience in these challenging times.

Respite this year is not going to be found in a collective four week closedown, instead holidays will be staggered to enable continuous support to operations. It is imperative that we look out for each other at this time, remembering that it is ok to ask for help or ask your mate if they need help. Whanaungatanga – collectively strong.

Mā te wā

**LTCOL Sheree Alexander**  
Commanding Officer

**WO1 Nick Grace**  
Regimental Sergeant Major

## 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion



2020 nearly done and dusted, a year many of us want to see over. That word 'unprecedented' somewhat over used, but probably still an appropriate way to describe the pandemic that has impacted the globe. Our year started out like any other with the normal routines then quickly descended into 'emergency mode' as lock downs progressed, people worked from home and Operation PROTECT kicked off. This saw HQ 3 CSSB become TASK GROUP SOUTH and the HQ packed full with double the amount it would normally house, struggling to physically distance while running the initial NZDF South Island response and preparing for the most dire potential consequences of the pandemic. As we stretched out of lock down the emergence of border work became a small task, that has snow balled into what is all consuming for the bulk of the Army. As this has all happened at home, we saw the draw down of OP MANAWA out of Iraq and the downsizing of some other operations in the Middle East region. We deployed our normal contingents to the Sinai including the sparky surge for urgent safety work. All off shore deployments were accompanied by uncertainty surrounding actual deployment and RTNZ dates along with ever changing local pandemic restrictions. As we head into this years festive season, Christmas holidays look a lot different for most, with the need to keep managed isolation facilities around the country staffed with management and security teams. Special family time will need to adapt to this change as we continue to carry out this critical task for New Zealand. All this is made possible through the hard work and dedication of all our military and civilian staff backed by our families who often sacrifice so much so that their partners/mums/dads and others can be a part of a Force for New Zealand.

On behalf of all members of the 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion, we wish all our service personnel, here at home and abroad, and their families, a very happy and safe festive season.

Whirikoka ō roto – Strength from within

**LTCOL Marcus Linehan**  
Commanding Officer



*This has been an incredibly important year for the NZDF that has seen many of us defending New Zealand in a way we could not have guessed this time last year. To the people deployed overseas on more traditional deployments, we must now add the contribution of a large number of NZDF personnel deployed within New Zealand keeping our nation safe from an invisible but mighty enemy. Separation from friends, partners and whanau is never easy but is often felt more keenly during the festive season.*

*Whether overseas, or within New Zealand, on behalf of the Officers, Sailors and Civilian Staff of HMNZS Philomel, I thank you all for your sacrifice and wish you and your loved ones a safe and Happy Christmas.*

***Commander Phil Wheadon***  
***HMNZS PHILOMEL Base Commander***



Group Captain Andy Scott  
Base Commander

## RNZAF Base Auckland



W/O Darren (Digby) Bentley  
Command Warrant Officer

Kia ora koutou,

What a year this one has been! We have achieved a lot considering our challenging working environments and it is almost easier to measure success by looking at what we haven't done! This year we have maintained an exceptional level of delivery through the great work completed across the NZDF, and this is a credit to your service and sacrifice in delivering daily operations.

At this time when we have you all deployed to the four winds, it is appropriate to acknowledge your whanau and friends in their enabling role as the home guardians. With the added complexities of COVID, we know it increases the stress levels at both ends as even when we do bring people home, we know its still two weeks before you can be with loved ones. So you and your whanau's commitment being on Operations is now more than ever, a testament to your sacrifice.

With operations both here and abroad, we once again fulfil our community, nation and world responsibilities with courage, commitment, comradeship and integrity. You are all the key to this success which can only come from a team effort, something we do like no other!

On Behalf of RNZAF Base Auckland we wish you all a safe and happy Christmas wherever you are able to rest. We look forward to your safe return and thank you for your outstanding efforts during this period of global disruption. See you again soon!

Meri Kirihimete



Group Captain Shaun Sexton  
Base Commander

## RNZAF Base Ohakea



W/O Guy Lipsham  
Command Warrant Officer

Nau mai, Haere mai ki a koutou katoa.

As the year draws to a close, we wish to acknowledge the service of our people who have unfailingly delivered outputs in support of New Zealand. Our country has needed us to combat COVID-19 with our military personnel, civilian staff, contractors, whanau and our communities making significant contributions and sacrifices. Base Ohakea and our people consistently undertake operations and exercises throughout the year; but the Christmas holiday season is a time when absences are felt more closely. So at this special time of year we would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to those of you who are deployed, and especially to your loved ones and families for their support. Many thanks also to those of you who remain on duty, prepared and ready to respond at a moment's notice.

To everyone, enjoy this special time to refresh, relax and return safely to us in the New Year.

Ma nga hua, Tu Tangata – by our actions we are known

Meri Kirihimete



To our deployed personnel all over the world, best wishes for a Merry Christmas! While you are away you are held within the hearts and minds of those closest to you at home.

To all of our fabulous families at home who will be spending this holiday season apart from loved ones on service overseas. We trust that you will gather your family and friends around you to share the day, the love and goodwill this season is all about.

Our special thoughts are with you all. A very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Your DSOs

*Janine and Carol*



## The Highs and Lows of Life on the Ice

*Reprinted with permission from The Westport News, 20 Nov 2020*

Our People

Raquel Joseph

More than three weeks working and living in Antarctica is the latest adventure for ex-local Morgan Clark.

The 27-year-old has been with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) for three-and-a-half years as a hydrographic systems operator at the Devonport Naval Base.

She said no two days in the defence force were the same.

She had been drawn to the travel opportunities and variety of work the NZDF provided, she said.

She also loved getting out on the water and surveying.

“I have had opportunities to travel around New Zealand by sea, and Australia and Antarctica by air, and have met some really awesome people along the way.”

Her role as a hydrographic systems operator involves a wide range of work.

When she's not in Antarctica, she works with the autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) team and conducts underwater search missions with a REMUS 100 AUV.

She travelled with a team of five NZDF hydrographers to the icy continent on October 30 and is scheduled to leave on November 24, if weather conditions allow flights.

Antarctica was a beautiful but challenging work environment, she said.

The group had gone there to survey the sea floor below the ice in front of Scott Base.

Antarctica New Zealand was redesigning the base and planned to build the buildings in New Zealand and ship them to Scott Base.

“We're here to verify previous survey work to make sure a ship can get in close to shore.”

The work varied daily, but they always started with a safety briefing followed by gearing up for the cold outside.

The cold weather gear was a learning curve, with different layers for different weather conditions, Morgan said.

“Being outside having to wear so many layers is a bit of a hindrance... It took me a few days to figure out what works for me.”

Three layers of gloves made it hard to drill holes, and to work as she would in warmer climates.

“It's kind of a trade-off between having warm hands and having the dexterity to do our job.”

She said the crew split into smaller teams to survey and drill into ice. Jobs were rotated throughout the day.

“Some people digging holes in specifically marked locations in the snow to get to the ice, some people drilling holes through the ice and some people measuring the depth of water using a lead line.”



*Morgan Clark in Antarctica. Photo: supplied*



The team had had to learn to adapt when ice was much thicker than expected.

At some drilling points, the group was expecting ice to be between 1.5 and 2.5 metres thick, when in reality it was about 7 metres thick.

“We have managed to adapt and continue with our work despite this, though...”

“Obviously, I knew it would be cold but it’s hard to imagine what it’s like being in temperatures as low as -33degC until you have experienced it.”

The coldness meant moisture from her breath often accumulated in her goggles, and instantly froze, making it difficult to see.

Morgan said the weather could change within minutes.

A sunny -12degC day could become a windy, snowy -22degC in 10 minutes.

While working in Antarctica had provided many new learning experiences, the communal living at Scott Base was much like being on a ship, she said.

Everyone at the base was well entertained, with movie nights, dress-up events, and outings on various walking trails

She took up photography during lockdown in April and had enjoyed being able to photograph Antarctica’s unique landscapes.

Before travelling to Antarctica, the group had to isolate for two weeks at a hotel in Christchurch.

After one week and two negative Covid-19 tests, Morgan was able to meet the rest of the Antarctica team.

She left Westport in 2000, when she was seven years old. Her grandmother still lives in Waimangaroa.

Morgan (nee Harris) said she had enjoyed growing up in Westport, a town with a great community atmosphere.

“How everyone there knows everyone, and how relaxed it is there compared to Auckland.”



**N**ew Zealand has a history of contributing to international efforts to resolve conflict. The NZ Defence Force (NZDF) is a valued international coalition partner committed to peace and security, and regularly works alongside international partners on operations and exercises throughout the world.

It is in New Zealand’s interests to play a leadership role in the South Pacific, acting in concert with our neighbours, helping to maintain stability, enhance regional security capabilities, and promote good governance and economic and social development .

The NZ Defence Force supports a number of major operations around the world. Currently there are personnel deployed on operations and UN missions across the world including:

Afghanistan, Antarctica, Middle East, Sinai, South Korea, South Sudan and the United Arab Emirates.

Currently, the NZDF are also committed to the Government’s efforts to eliminate COVID-19 with personnel working in Managed Isolation Quarantine Facilities in various locations around New Zealand.

# NZDF NEWS

## Army Mechanic Named NZDF Person of the Year

2 December 2020

Tokahaumata Oltaches-Tagavaitau joined the New Zealand Army partly to keep her parents happy. Fast-forward 15 years on, the Army mechanic has been named New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Person of the Year.

Staff Sergeant Oltaches-Tagavaitau, a member of the Royal NZ Army Logistics Regiment currently deployed to the Sinai, took out the top award at a ceremony at Royal New Zealand Air Force Base Ohakea this week.

Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal Kevin Short said Staff Sergeant Oltaches-Tagavaitau has developed into a high performing and unwaveringly reliable soldier with a wide range of interests and associations.

“She has equally proven to be a proficient tradesperson, an inspiring leader, a determined and dedicated sports person, and a proactive member of the NZDF Pasifika community.”

On top of her regular trade, Staff Sergeant Oltaches-Tagavaitau was an effective leader, manager and supervisor, taking on extra responsibilities, he said.

Staff Sergeant Oltaches-Tagavaitau was also an accomplished sportswoman who has been successful in a number of codes, and has also given back to each sport through coaching and administration.

She had led initiatives in the NZDF Pasifika and Army Women communities, and provides leadership and support so that others are able to reach their full potential within the NZDF.

“Staff Sergeant Oltaches-Tagavaitau is the epitome of the core values of the NZDF – Tū Kaha courage, Tū Tika commitment, Tū Tira



Staff Sergeant Tokahaumata Oltaches-Tagavaitau

comradeship and Tū Māia integrity,” Air Marshal Short said.

After winning the 2020 Soldier of the Year award, she said the Army had ticked all the boxes and she had no regrets about enlisting.

She had four goals for a career; how to avoid university without disappointing her parents, how to gain a qualification without a student loan, how to contribute financially to her home and to pursue a career that was outside the social norm.

When hearing she had been named as Person of the Year, Staff Sergeant Oltaches-Tagavaitau said it was incredibly overwhelming.

Her award was an acknowledgement of all the sacrifices, unconditional love and support her family had blessed her with, she said.



SSGT Tokahaumata Oltaches-Tagavaitau's husband Corporal Jaxon Tagavaitau accepts the NZDF Person of the Year Award on her behalf from Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal Kevin Short





“This is a very proud occasion not only for New Zealand Pasifika community but also the wider Pasifika nations. This is an empowering opportunity to pave the way for Pasifika to explore a successful military career, and most importantly, inspire and encourage our Pasifika families to explore unique career paths outside the social norms.”

“My career has been unique and very rewarding. I have gained so many skills and incredible experiences. My time as a young soldier, sportswoman and leader within the organisation is challenging, but is hands-down among my proudest achievements,” she said.

Source: NZDF News Release

**Note:**

- SSGT Oltaches-Tagavaitau is deployed to the Sinai until mid-2021. She heard about being named Soldier of the Year via an online meeting with the Chief of Army, and about being named Person of the Year via a 3.30am local time phone call from her husband, who attended the ceremony and accepted the award of her behalf.
- SSGT Oltaches-Tagavaitau is the second women of Pacific background to win the Soldier of the Year award – and the first to win NZDF Person of the Year.
- Pasifika were well represented in this year’s NZDF Person of the Year Awards, with the top sailor and airman coming from Samoan backgrounds and SSGT Oltaches-Tagavaitau having a Cook Island background.



## OUR VALUES



### **Courage | Tū Kaha - Taking action despite your fears**

Courage is having the moral and physical strength to do what is right, even in the face of adversity. It is stepping up when things get hard. It is speaking up when you see things are wrong. Courage is enforcing our standards and discipline. It is not giving in to peer pressure

### **Commitment | Tū Tika - Giving your best**

Commitment is doing your best. It is always looking for ways to achieve the task, and persevering even when the going gets tough. Commitment is accepting and living our values and standards. It is serving New Zealand.

### **Comradeship | Tū Tira - Respecting and looking out for each other**

Comradeship is respecting the differences of the people around you and treating others as you would like to be treated. It is working together as a team, being inclusive, recognising we are stronger together. Comradeship is never an excuse for covering up other people’s wrong doing.

### **Integrity | Tū Maia - Doing the right thing – always**

Integrity is conducting yourself honestly, ethically and to the highest professional standards—even when no one is watching. It is doing the things that you say you are going to do. Integrity is accepting responsibility for your decisions and actions.



**A FORCE FOR  
NEW ZEALAND**



# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

*News from  
Dubai*

*Articles and opinions from Foreign Correspondents are  
not necessarily those of the NZDF*

## Transition of Authority on Op TROY

**LTCOL Aimee Davis**  
Senior National Officer (SNO)  
Op TROY

When Commander Andrew Nuttall deployed on OP TROY in November last year, COVID 19 was unheard of. In his 12 month tour to Al Minhad Air Base (AMAB) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where New Zealand has a small team supporting missions about the Middle Eastern Region (MER), things have changed remarkably. When COVID hit, any plans for leave during the tour went out the window and they got on with the mission of providing the link between home and NZDF members deployed throughout the MER. The military has a saying that “No plan survives H Hour” and COVID has been testament to this.

On behalf of the currently serving Op TROY personnel, thank you to all of you back home for supporting those that have deployed during 2020 and recently returned home. We hope you enjoy Christmas with them now they are back with you and deserving of a long anticipated and well deserved leave period.

Last week saw the Transfer of Authority (TOA) between CDR Nuttall and LTCOL Davis in a small but significant ceremony attended by the NZ Defence Attache for the MER, Brigadier Roger Margetts, the incoming and outgoing Commanding Generals of the Australian Task Group based from AMAB and a number of other coalition representatives the Kiwis continue to have strong ties to in the region.

Already in our short time here (post 14 days quarantine), we have not only had the KIWI TOA but the Australian Command TOA occurred the following day. Then came Thanksgiving and a shared meal with U.S personnel staying in Kiwi Lines, followed by a ceremony with our neighbours here in AMAB, the small Dutch Contingent signifying the halfway point of their four month tour of duty.

COVID 19 has brought with it a need to understand not only quarantine and isolation policies for the UAE and countries we deploy into, but also the coalition partners we work alongside



*CDR Andrew Nuttall and LTCOL Aimee Davis at the Transfer of Authority ceremony,  
24 Nov 2020*



# News from Dubai

Articles and opinions from Foreign Correspondents are not necessarily those of the NZDF



LTCOL Aimee Davis making a pav for Thanksgiving



SGT Rachelle Canham, OPSO

and reliable. TROY is by no means any different. There is still a steady flow of personnel deploying into and out of theatre and at TROY we prepare them for deployment forward or homeward by issuing or returning the military kit and giving them the opportunity to do the final preparation and checks for the next phase.

Unfortunately COVID has meant we cannot currently offer the link up for leave, shopping, attractions or respite that having Dubai on our doorstep has afforded those passing through in years gone by. We hope that we will be able to do so again in the future but in the meantime we will be here providing logistic support for your loved ones a step closer than home.

day to day. If a coalition member or Locally Employed Civilian (LEC) was to contract COVID, it could rapidly change our operating environment so we must take precautions to protect ourselves and the NZDF personnel we support transiting through our lines.

Although the numbers of personnel passing through Op TROY has diminished, the support the Kiwis provide here is as important as ever and the pace of life here certainly hasn't dropped off. As with all of our deployment locations, Kiwi's have a reputation for being friendly, trustworthy

**Ngā Mihi Nui. Meri Kirihimete e te whānau.**

**OP TROY**

**Te Taua Tomokanga ki te Rāwhiti – Warriors of the Eastern Gateway**



Attending the Dutch mid-tour saw

The Dutch contingent literally saw a 4x4 post in half. They paint up the post prior. The cut is at the eight week point of their four month tour, hence 'mid tour saw'. It is usually the SNO and the youngest per that cut it across, but these guys each had a go and cut it long ways.

It took three handsaws but they finally got one sharp enough for the job!

# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

## News from Antarctica

Articles and opinions from Foreign Correspondents are not necessarily those of the NZDF

### Operation Antarctica

#### AHSO Morgan Clark

Recently, a team of six hydrographers from HMNZS MATATAUA got the opportunity to deploy to Scott Base, Antarctica. In preparation for the cold and challenging environment, we conducted PDT and a week training at Lake Alta, a frozen lake in The Remarkables near Queenstown (see NT Oct 20). Come October, and after two weeks of isolation and three Covid-19 tests, we boarded a USAF C-17 Globemaster taking us to Phoenix Airfield on the ice at Ross Island, Antarctica. The aim of the deployment was to conduct a survey of the seabed in front of Scott Base to confirm charted data and determine if it was possible to bring a ship up to Scott Base to assist with the Scott Base Redevelopment project.

Before surveying work could begin the team had to complete Antarctic field training, a two-day course on basic survival techniques in the Antarctic environment. This included spending a night camping on the ice in the bright yellow Scott Polar tents.

The deployment lasted about three weeks, working on the ice from Monday to Saturday. The Antarctic environment does come with its challenges. After our training in Lake Alta, we decided survey by drilling holes into the ice and lowering a single beam echo sounder (SBES) through the holes to get spot depth measurements was the best way to go. Work began in the pressure ridges just in front of Scott Base with the help of the Antarctic field trainers. The team dug through about a metre of snow to the sea ice and drilled our first hole in the ice to find it was almost seven metres thick, not the one to two metres we were expecting. The SBES cable is a fixed length and we were unable to lower the SBES enough to reach the sea below the ice. We quickly changed tactics again, deciding on the old fashioned lead line to get our depths, and the highly accurate surveying GPS for the position. The advantage of this was that it was much quicker than the previous

option with using a smaller-gauge drill, and we were able to get a greater density of depths within our survey area.

As well as being hard at work we had some time off to explore this incredible place. There are heaps of walking tracks which on occasion had some wildlife to see along the way. The NZDF contingent hosted a military formal dinner for everyone at Scott Base to enjoy, and get a feel for these military-style events while learning about the history and traditions involved. For a couple of weeks during the trip COVID-19 protection restrictions were eased and travel was allowed between the US McMurdo Station and Scott Base giving us the option to visit their base and play some inter-base sports games. On top of all that, Scott Base's little home away from home cabin, the 'Square Frame', gave opportunity to really get away from it all.

Overall, the deployment was a success, we got the data we were here to get and I had a great time along the way. I just hope now I can come back again someday!



## A Pristine Environment

**F/S Jae Ekman**  
Cargo Handler & 2IC  
Op ANTARCTICA

November is a special month for my family and I. My son turned four on the 10<sup>th</sup>, my birthday is on Remembrance Day the 11<sup>th</sup>, and I'm a day older than my wife on the 12<sup>th</sup>. My two year old daughter Freya had to be different and was born in July. We always do something special. Last year we went to the Gold Coast. This year was different, though. I was deployed to Scott Base as part of a small NZDF Scott Base Support Team (SBST) on 5 Oct after my 'flight cohort' isolated in Christchurch for 14 days. It's the first time since being a dad that I've deployed operationally with work.

Covid-19 has shaped this Summer season, even as early as the 'Winfly' winter resupply flights that delayed from August to mid-September. I didn't realise at the time of applying what an effect it would have on other NZDF missions. For the Joint Logistics pool it has meant a reduction in the airlift programme. For Antarctica NZ it has meant a reduction in the science that takes place down here, with a reduced personnel footprint that supports the science. These are the engineering and base services that keep the base operational and enables science at Scott Base and out in the field. An unfortunate series of weather events meant that the ice pier was unable to be formed this season, so the vessel was cancelled and along with it, the Ship Offload Team (SOLT) that the NZDF also contributes. This means that an 'airbridge' has been implemented where the C-17 will fly extra missions through to the end of March to make up the shortfall.

Usually the SBST would be a team of nine but this season we were cut back to five with myself as Cargo Handler/2IC SBST, SGT Kirsten Pease

"KP" (LOGSPEC) from RNZAF Base Woodbourne as Senior Communications Operator, LMED Alex Carter from Naval Defence House as Communications Operator, LCPL Laochailan "Mac" McGregor, a Plant Operator from Linton and LCPL Nathan "Jamo" Jamieson, a Plant Operator from Burnham. Mac and Jamo are our heavy lifters on the team. Not only for driving the heavy machinery around base but they are regulars at the gym. Alex has proven herself adept at baking cakes for birthdays and has made the carpenter shop her second home, making the gavel for the Formal Dinner amongst other things. KP has been known to spin a few rhymes on the morning comms announcements as well as perfecting her latte art game. I enjoy helping out around the base, particularly with the domestic staff who keep the base clean and orderly. Besides the good banter, they work hard all week and it's the type of work where the more hands that help the lesser their load, especially with all the extra precautions and cleaning for Covid-19.

After PDT, the AntNZ ANZAP training, fire training at Woolston and then isolation, it was good to finally be here. As a cargo handler the workload is moderate but steady. It's very much in line with how we operate on other missions. Patience is a key attribute in many ways as Covid has again changed the



F/SGT Edman—11 Nov 20  
Photo Credit: Kitty Niven

way things are done. Freight and mail from NZ has to be quarantined for four days before it can be loaded on a plane to us. If the team in Harewood have to go in and open the freight for any reason it resets the quarantine time. Whenever a flight brings in new passengers from NZ for either Scott



# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

## News from Antarctica

*Articles and opinions from Foreign Correspondents are not necessarily those of the NZDF*



*Hydrographic Team*

Base or McMurdo Station the Covid response on the Ross Island goes to Yellow. The new cohort fly down in masks and have to have seven days of masks, social distancing, separate meal timings, different bathroom facilities and regular morning health checks before being cleared and accepted into the general population. When I do cargo drop off's or pick ups at McMurdo it

is all done contactless communicating by radio only. When I have to get out of my vehicle to tie down a load all the McMurdo staff have to leave the cargo yard to their office until I'm done.

One of the main reasons I wanted to come down to Scott Base was to experience the other end of the supply chain. For the last two seasons I've been supporting Op ANT at the Harewood Terminal Team as the Air Cargo Supervisor. One of the main takeaways from here is how a simple process like unloading a fully laden C-17 at Harewood can take so much longer at Phoenix just because of the environment and having to truck all the aircraft pallets back to McMurdo. Their limited facilities mean it can take a few days to process the cargo rather than a few hours back in NZ. My goal would be for the team in the cargo yard to produce a payload that is less effort for the McMurdo team to process.



*Crater Hill—Photo Credit: Kitty Niven*

We have had a few special events this month. We of course had Remembrance Day on 11 Nov, for which we had a small service. Our ranks were bolstered by a RNZN Hydrographic Team who were here to survey the shore in front of Scott Base to assist with plans to bring a ship in as part of the Scott Base Redevelopment Project. With their help the SBST hosted the first Scott Base military Formal Dinner on 16 Nov with Op ANT SNO, Major Andrew Thornton, presiding as Dinner President and LPCL McGregor as Mr Vice. It was an excellent night enjoyed by all and one which may become a key feature in future summer seasons.

Also on the 16<sup>th</sup>, Kirsten and I were able to have a VTC with the current Logspec Course at RNZAF Base Woodbourne which was a very cool opportunity to discuss some of the challenges we face working down here.

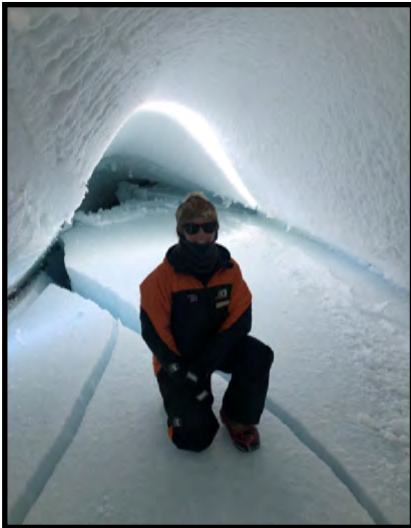
On 18 Nov Scott Base joined other



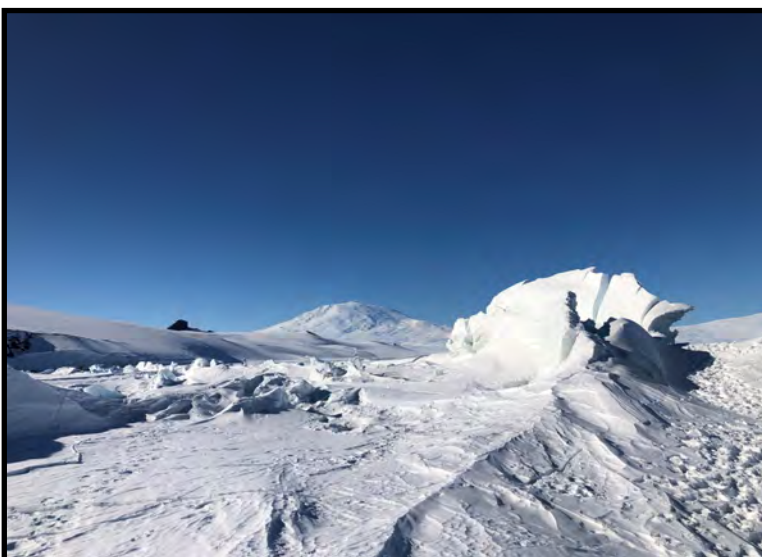
*11 Nov Parade—Photo Credit: Kitty Niven*

# News from Antarctica

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Pressure ridges



Antarctic programmes in showing their support for the LGBTQ+ recognition of LGBTQ+ inclusion and contribution to polar science as part of Polar Pride Day.

On the morning of 28 Nov we had a ceremony to remember the 257 crew and passengers lost in the Erebus disaster 41 years ago. It was short but emotional. Erebus was a dominant feature in the landscape behind us and a bitter wind made the occasion that much more real.

That night we also had our Movember function celebrating the month-long fundraising efforts of those that participated and where Nathan took out Best Mo.

The ambient temps have been noticeably warmer this week averaging about -4c. Warm enough to be outside in t-shirts if there's no wind. Ross Island is definitely seeing some ice melt with a lot more brown from the volcanic rock coming through. The roads are getting slushy and there's lots of snow melt run off that is causing big pot holes and troughs and refreezes. At one point a large crane belonging to US Antarctic Program was making its way over the hill from McMurdo to Phoenix airfield one morning where it kept losing grip and sliding down the road. It came to rest outside of Scott Base where it stayed for two weeks until it was safe to move it again.

There has been snow built up on the rooftops of Scott Base that are now a hazard too so the carpenter, with help from the field trainers, have been going up and clearing it so it doesn't fall on anyone. The ice melt was also finding its way through the rooftops causing leaks, especially in older sections of the base.

The warmer weather is evident in the pressure ridges in front of the base too. It's easy to forget that Scott Base is on an outcrop of an island and everything

# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

## News from Antarctica

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in front of us is sea ice that will break out in the next few months. The pressure ridges themselves is the sea ice buckling under the pressure of tides against the island. They have grown very large since we first got here. There are some that roll like dunes, there are some that are like small jagged mountains. They have even formed caves that we can go into when guided by a Field Trainer. We're getting melt pools around them where the upper layers of snow and ice are melting and refreezing when it gets colder. It makes them look like big blue ponds. The seals are still big, fat and lazy and soaking up the sun. There are a lot of pups now. They get tagged and named by the scientists. We're told the sea ice should break up around late Dec/early Jan. The earlier it breaks out the more likely we will see some wild life like orcas, humpback whales and penguins. Everyone is excited for penguins. I'm told by some that have spent a lot of time down here that those creatures will be long gone if it takes any longer for sea ice to break up.

The Field Trainers have taken us out on a few fam trips on Sundays which is our low activity day like a Hagglund trip out to Turtle Rock which was a nice excursion. Turtle Rock doesn't resemble a turtle when you get close to it but at a distance it's passable.

The Field Trainers took a small group of us up to Castle Rock. It's a big volcanic rock formation that is 415m high that looks out over Ross Island. Our group all have experience and quals with Working at Heights and the field training enables us to take out small groups to Castle Rock to safely climb to the top and back down again. It was an amazingly still night with no wind, no cloud. We got to the top had a rest, then did some spontaneous yoga and then climbed down again.

One morning I was doing a bag drag and leaving the base for McMurdo

Cargo when I saw a weather phenomenon called a Sun Dog where ice particles in the air catch the light and form a halo around the sun, also causing the illusion of multiple suns. A quick radio call back to base saw all the shutter bugs come outside and share this experience with the world.

I've always wanted to come down and work here. The place is fascinating and steeped in history, the environment is pristine. To be here and contribute to NZDF's Antarctic commitment and now to be inducted into NZ's Antarctic history means a lot to me. Even though it's difficult being away from my family this is an experience I know I will look back on often.



Sundog  
Photo Credit: Jamie McGaw



Mt Erebus in the background  
Photo Credit: Kitty Niven



November Winners



## March, Shoot and Drive

**CPL Brooke Stirling**  
Op FARAD 1-20

Kiwis were the winners when a March, Shoot and Driver competition (MAS-DC) for the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) was held in South Camp, Sinai recently.

The MAS-DC was conceived by the Training Warrant Officer as a way to test concepts for the Force Skills Competition which is an annual competition conducted in February. The MAS-DC allowed contingents on six monthly rotations to practise their soldiering skills in a competitive environment. SSGT Timothy Watt was in charge of the Mads stand and SGT Bridget Johnson the DC stand.

The MAS-DC consisted of 10 six person contingent teams. The New Zealand contingent identified its keen personnel early leaving plenty of time to train; however, multiple injuries and MFO work commitments meant the team was forever changing. The final team was decided three days out from competition and included PTE Coby Devery, SGT Troy Holt-Pedersen, SGT Iain Latham-Prokopowicz, CAPT Matthew Horn, MAJ Peter Bowyer and MAJ Michael Spicer. In addition, the team had the support of our PTI SGT Marshall Oldehaver.

The events :

- ◆ A timed 500m stretcher carrier at 100kgs,
- ◆ A timed 2.5 km run with rifles and webbing/body armour (contingent battle rig) and
- ◆ A time and accuracy- based short-range shoot from 20 m and 10m in supported and unsupported firing positions.
- ◆ Four stands as a part of the driving competition which involved moving forward in garage driving, a three-point turn, continuing through a slalom, a diminishing corner and stopping on an A3 piece of paper. From there competitors conducted this in reverse.

Each activity had many penalties up for

grabs. It just depended on whether time or accuracy was going to cost the team less. Unfortunately, the team did not know what each penalty would cost, and it became a guessing game.

Starting positions were dictated by a lucky dip, with most teams hoping to begin second or third for the day. The later your team started the hotter it would get with temperatures still averaging mid 30's (although this was a lot cooler than what we had experienced earlier in the tour). Over the two days five teams would compete starting from 0545 with half hour spacings. The New Zealanders competed on day one stepping off third.

After a short safety and shooter's brief from SSGT Watt, the team stepped off on the stretcher carry which had varying terrain and a slight hill climb. From there it was a quick transition into the 2.5 km run, with the team's combined time coming in at 18.26 and being the fastest overall for that portion of the MAS.

The driving competition was up next, with SGT Johnson taking the team through a brief explaining the route. The decision again needed to be made on whether to focus on time or accuracy.

Overall, the MAS-DC components combined provided a robust test of teamwork, leadership, marksmanship, fitness, and resilience. Although it was thought having New Zealand contingent members as stand IC's would give us an unfair advantage, it appeared to be the opposite with harsh penalties coming the team's way in both stands.



# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

*News from  
Sinai*

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not necessarily those of the NZDF*

## NZCON Driving Team Arrive in South Camp

**LCPL Calvin Ross**  
Driving Team 21C

Kia Ora from the sunny Sinai. We have had a busy few days with the crew from 01-20 (people heading home) showing us the ropes on how the MFO is run during our hand over take over (HOTO).

Day 1: We left our quarantine facility and moved to South Camp which we will call home for the next six months before returning to our loved ones. On arrival we were welcomed on with a powhiri. From there we were taken to our rooms by our counterparts from 01-20.

Day 2: We set up and zeroed our weapons. This was then followed by the drivers getting taken away and shown our fleet of trucks and busses we will be using for the duration of our time in South Camp.

Day 3: We were taken for a run around the camp and shown by our PTIs the lay of the land which included Herbs Beach, a great snorkelling location! The rest of the day consisted of everyone conducting their own individual hand overs, so we knew what was expected of us when the time came for 01-20 to leave us and head home.

Day 4: The drivers from 01-20 took us to all the locations within the Sharm bubble while the rest of the contingent conducted their individual hand overs.

Day 5: Myself and PTE Kerr had the opportunity to make our way to Remote Site 2 which is about 250km north of Sharm El Sheikh and do a trailer swap with FOB North, our other MFO base in Sinai. This was a real eye opener and a look into how some of the world lives.

Day 6: This was the last day we had with the outgoing counterparts before they went into isolation. They were farewelled by 02-20 with a haka before they hopped onto the bus.

To all the members of OP FARAD 01-20 thank you for everything you have shown us. We are looking forward to keeping the high level of professionalism that your contingent held throughout your time here.



*CAPT Matthew Horn carrying a Taiaha conducting a Wero during the Powhiri to welcome 02-20 on to South Camp*



*02-20 are welcomed on to South Camp*



*MFO trucks the drivers use to provide logistic support to Remote Sites*



*Farewell to members of 01-20*

## Desert Dispatches and Stories from Sinai

**Chief Petty Officer Bart Couprie**  
S1 Administrator  
NZCON 02-20, Op FARAD

Salaam 'aleikum from South Camp in Sinai, where NZ Contingent 02-20 has taken up their posts and have relieved the previous contingent who are now homeward bound. In fact, by the time you read this, they will be almost at the end of their quarantine and nearly home with their families.

Since we all mustered at Whenuapai Air Force base on the 19<sup>th</sup> October, we've had three flights, a three day stopover in Dubai and another 14 days isolation to get through the camp gates. The first leg was with an RNZAF Hercules to Sydney, where we then

had a five hour wait in a very empty and surreal Sydney airport until our charter flight picked us up for the leg to Dubai. Gloves and facemasks were very much in vogue, it is all the jet set is wearing these days! Once settled, gloves were able to be removed, but the masks only came off for meals. An overnight flight led to more than a few bleary eyes the following morning, but we did catch our first glimpses of the desert through our windows. On arrival in Dubai, we were welcomed

with open arms by our NZ Contingent there. They really looked after us too, giving up a sizeable portion of their compound and facilities for our



*The plunge pool at Dubai in the NZ Compound*



*Row 10, seats A and B, about to be happily occupied by myself and WO2 Jason Edgecombe*

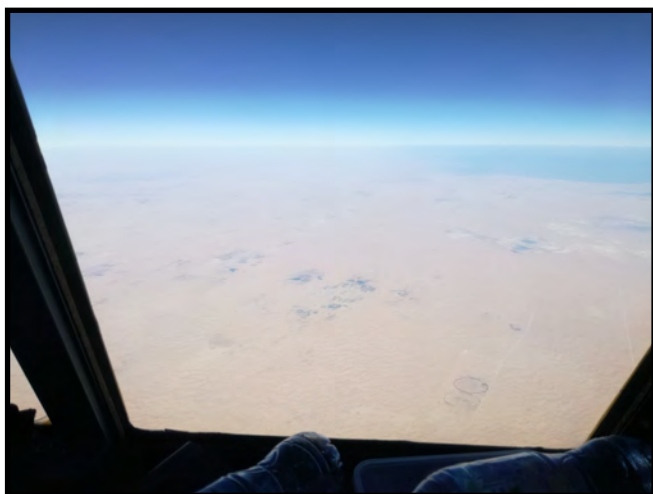


*NZ CON 02-20 on board the RAAF Hercules inbound to Egypt*

# FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

*News from  
Sinai*

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not necessarily those of the NZDF*



Saudi Arabia, with the Arabian gulf in the distance, from the cockpit of our RAAF Hercules flight

exclusive use over the next three days, including their prized pool area and patio. It was much appreciated by the contingent who found themselves in comfortable, air-conditioned rooms with Wi-Fi, so we could all contact our families and keep in touch.



*Members of the contingent at another PT session on the 200m 'track' in isolation, with varying levels of fitness taking care of the social distancing for us!*

We still managed to find time and space to get a few PT sessions out of the way, where Sgt Speck's seemingly limitless enthusiasm for getting us all moving, even in the small space available to us, was both dreaded and enjoyed in equal measure.

Meanwhile, plans were in place to allow us to

move on. An uncomfortable nasal swab to make sure we were all free of COVID-19 before boarding our flight to Egypt was administered courtesy of our Australian cousins (with some of us being very brave and getting a lollypop afterwards) and we all proved clear to fly. The next day, we boarded the

Australian Air Force Hercules bound for Egypt.

Our Australian counterparts were great hosts, and allowed us to roam around the aircraft to stretch our

legs, including a visit to the cockpit for those who wished to get a real birds eye view of the Saudi Arabian peninsula as we flew overhead.

On arrival at Sharm el Sheikh airport, we made our way to the airport terminal, and glimpsed some familiar kiwi faces through the fence as members of the current contingent welcomed us with friendly waves and faces that, although concealed by facemasks, were clearly pleased to see us. After a quick change of role from passengers to baggage handlers to help unload our luggage, we were loaded on to buses and taken to our accommodation for 14 days of isolation before being allowed on to South Camp.

Although the group was isolated in our own rooms, we managed to keep in touch either through chats on the balconies, or through our group WhatsApp chat. Along with the PTI's quiz, morale was kept high during our isolation with score updates from Bledisloe Cup rugby matches, the State of Origin, pictures of whatever towel animal the room service crew had left



*NZCON 02-20 with luggage waiting outside the Jolie Ville*

# News from Sinai

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Members of NZCON 02-20 taking advantage of the shade while waiting for our bus.

day, with PO Stacey Greer leading us in a waiata, while the critical ears of SGT Renz Riddick and SSGT Mata Oltaches-Tagavaitau tried to find anyone singing flat.

Luckily, the time we had spent at the Army Marae

sure we were kept healthy and well. We were all keen to get out to our new home for the next six months and get hands on with our mission roles.

It was good to be able to mix a little more freely as a full contingent again, even with facemasks and social distancing. We were in great spirits, and we had come through the isolation in good shape. Once the luggage truck and bus turned up, with members of the outgoing contingent as our drivers, we loaded up and headed out.

On arrival at South Camp, we were welcomed by the outgoing RSM and led towards the Woolshed, where the current contingent was lined up ready to welcome us as only Kiwis can.

Finally, big thanks to the last contingent for making us so welcome. For a lot of us, it felt a lot like coming home again! You all made sure that the fantastic reputation of the Kiwi Contingent in Sinai remains intact. We are now the custodians of that fine reputation and look forward to making sure that it will continue through to the next rotation and beyond.

Arohanui from NZCON SINAI 02-20

on the bed, and the occasional impromptu game of I Spy!

As our 14 day quarantine came to an end we were able to get together again as a full contingent, with some social distancing thrown in. Daily temperature checks had ensured that we were all still safe and healthy, and ready to move on to South Camp the next morning. We took the last opportunity as a contingent to make sure that we would be ready for our powhiri the next

under Royal's tutelage during our pre deployment training paid off handsomely, and although we are no Six-60, we can carry a tune if we have to!

The next morning was taken up with the final bit of packing and making sure nothing was left behind as we vacated our rooms. We had been well looked after by the staff at Jolie Ville, and by those members of the Multinational Force stationed at the hotel to make



PO Stacey Greer and L Daniel Lord (without hats) waiting for their turn on the range.)



Driving Team Section Commander CPL Cindy Ries-Rupapera being shown how to get around swiftly in South Camp.

# DSO'S CORNER



## Carol Voyce

Deployment Services Officer  
Editor "The Bugle"

I wrapped my first Christmas present several weeks ago. My daughter had registered us for "Shoebox Christmas - Aotearoa" which invites members of the community to support local families, especially children, with some Christmas cheer. The charity works alongside low decile schools, preschools, Women's Refuge and other community organisations and to help, we were sent some guidelines for the child allocated to us. We were assigned a seven year old girl and her interests listed included Unicorns, science, drawing and fashion. We were emailed a label and a barcode to attach to a wrapped shoebox to identify the child when the gifts were distributed. It was fun shopping. Of course I know nothing about the Unicorn craze but the toyshop was well stocked with a variety of all things Unicorn. With a guideline to spend between \$20 - \$40, we quickly amassed \$50 with a number of presents to meet her interests, which I am sure are going to bring huge smiles to this seven year old. Such a great "feel good" charity to contribute to.

Yesterday we got a really nice thank you email from the organisers of the charity, acknowledging our contribution and for "caring enough to make a difference".

That initial burst of Christmas Shopping

hasn't yet extended further but I have made lists. There is so much happening at the moment both at work and home and I am hoping that this weekend I may be able to make some progress. It's not unusual to feel overwhelmed as Christmas nears. Many of you managing a household alone or parenting alone, will feel you have full and sole responsibility to bring Christmas cheer to your family. Others with family members in COVID Managed Isolation will be longing for that reunion and to share the load. December can certainly bring lots of pressure. We are all longing for breaks in routines and some summer fun.

Operation CHRISTMAS CARD met all my expectations from previous years. You will see in this edition of The Bugle some further comment on the project and some heart-warming and funny contributions I retrieved from the many cards and letters. I had the final pile of some 200 cards to read at home over the weekend. The glitter which usually adorns my office – is now in my living room waiting for the Dyson to appear. It was great to read what young folk have written and the jokes were priceless. Make sure you take the time to read some of their contributions. And take time to reflect on their sincerity and take a laugh at their jokes.

I am looking forward to a family Christmas here. No travel so it will be



nice to be home and join in our traditional festivities. My little grandson will, this year, be able to appreciate a little, what the fuss is about, although I know he will be terrified of the man in red when he encounters him in the coming weeks. I have asked him if he would like a parcel and of course he says yes! We have been sharing the traditional story of Christmas and I look forward to bringing him to the Burnham Christmas Eve service to listen to the Carol singing. Our family have many Christmas traditions, which my Australian son in law struggles with, but these have been handed down through our generations and all form a big part of the festive season and how we celebrate it. I am sure there will be cookies for Santa, carrots for the reindeer and plenty of Christmas music. Soon we will get to decorate the tree and the festive spirit will begin.



Janine and I will be alternating our break over the holidays and at times will divert our phones to each other so don't be surprised if there is a different voice at the end of the line when you call and call you should! All Deployment Support Services are unchanged over the festive season and there will be a willing team to help you along the way if needed, send urgent messages through to deployment locations or simply to offer a listening ear.

Wishing you all a safe and peaceful Christmas and a new year filled with great things. I look forward to being in touch with you all in 2021.



## Janine Burton

Deployment Services Officer

**Y**ou will all agree that 2020 has been a year like no other we have ever experienced and fervently hope it will not be repeated. While we still go about our day to day lives here in New Zealand, we need to remain vigilant because Covid-19 is still in our world and we all have a part to play in keeping it contained. Those of our families who live in Auckland are more aware of this than most of us in other parts of the country, as you have been through a second lock down (level 3) since the Level 4 which impacted us all.

For a variety of reasons, Christmas can bring a whole raft of challenges and anxieties for a number of families and having your loved one deployed at this time added to the mix, can increase the stresses. I hope that this will not include you this year. If you are feeling that you are sliding down into a period of holiday season gloom, reach out to your support system—family and/or friends. I am sure that you will have

people around you who are there to help you through or strategies that you can employ to help you at that time. For some lucky families, your deployed person will have returned home to NZ and in the majority of cases their period of isolation is complete and they will be home with you. As you process your way through the reintegration of your family unit, if things become stressed, take a big breath and remember that communication is the key to success in all things which includes relationships which have been tested by separation.

Our servicemen and women who are away will be celebrating the festive season in their own fashion. I'm sure that if you have sent gifts, or were very organised and managed to send your small gift with them in their luggage, and of course they will not be opened until the big day (no guarantees here), will appreciate your thoughtfulness and the love with which they were sent.

I'm sure that everyone in their respective deployment locations

around the world will make an effort to make contact with those at home. Please be patient if they can't make contact until late on Christmas Day, or they ring very early. Remember the time differences so while we are already in the throws of Christmas Day here in NZ, the rest of the world comes after us. If your loved one rings you on Boxing Day here, it may still be Christmas Day there!

Regardless, I hope you have a wonderful day with family and friends to support you, and contingents make this a special time in their respective part of the world.

Remember that either Carol or I will be at the end of the phone throughout the Christmas and New Year period if you need a listening ear.

This year, my husband, my mum and I are very organised with our gift buying. We only buy for the little people in our lives now so our Christmas shopping was all done in October and is now wrapped and hidden in my wardrobe and waiting for the tree to go up. I must admit that getting out the tree is not one of the tasks I look forward to each year and I will generally leave it until one or two days out from 25 Dec. In actual fact, it only goes up because the grandchildren expect it, and my own children make such a fuss. Once the day is over however, it doesn't hang around for long either and is packed away within a day or two for another year.

In closing, thank you to all those family members who have joined me for dinner over the year. It was a real joy to host you.

A safe and happy Christmas and New Year to you all. Roll on 2021!

## ***We are here for you!***

Need advice, support or information to manage the deployment journey?

Contact Carol Voyce, DSO Burnham **0800 337 569**  
or Janine Burton, DSO Linton **0800 683 77 327**

# CHAPLAIN'S PEN



## CHAP Colin Mason

Navy Chaplain  
Devonport Naval Base



meaning of Christmas, then it will always be seen by many as an inconvenience.

## Christmas ... How Inconvenient!

I know exactly what you're thinking. "Christmas is here again; where has the year gone?"

I guess Christmas wouldn't be such an inconvenience if it weren't smack in the middle of postings, school holidays, end of year activities, in the heat of summer and when I'm short of cash.

We Southern hemisphere dwellers have a rough deal. A Northern hemisphere Christmas is well clear of holidays and all those school break-ups, etc.

So, if we were to conduct a survey on when best to celebrate Christmas; what would the outcome be? Where would it sit comfortably on our calendar?

I think we would all struggle to find an "appropriate" date and time. Our lives are so pre-occupied throughout the year; whatever date we settled on would be deemed "inconvenient".

My reading the Bible indicates that

even that very first Christmas caused inconvenience for many.

Mary and Joseph were inconvenienced. They were miles away from home and the birth of their son Jesus took place amidst the stench of a stable.



The Wise Men had some considerable distance to travel on camels before they found Jesus. There must have been a few blisters in unmentionable places.



The Shepherds surely were inconvenienced. Bright lights, heavenly choirs must have alarmed the sheep scattering them in all directions.



And what about Herod? His kingship was threatened by the birth of this baby Jesus.....he must have had a few sleepless nights.

You can read these accounts for yourself in Matthew or Luke's recordings.

I guess until we discover the true

Christmas is not really about spending all those hard earned dollars or keeping sane while untangling those lights or trying to keep the tree from continually toppling over or about a fat bearded man in red.....Yes, these components are part of our Christmas and yes they do add colour and glamour and excitement; but Christmas is really about the coming into this world, our world, of the very presence of God, through the birth of His Son, Jesus.

## God incarnate ... God in the Flesh

Recognizing that God is willing and prepared to come into our world, to taste and see and feel as do we, to rub shoulders with the hurting and the lost and the lonely and the disoriented and the oppressed ... and amidst this ... offer hope and comfort and meaning and ...

What about taking time amidst this "silly season" to investigate for yourself the true significance of Christmas? Maybe you will find it is a very convenient time and occasion after all.

Meanwhile, take it easy and have a Happy Christmas.  
What about a Hopeful Christmas!



## Deployment Support Services

Need information?  
Need support?  
Need a listening ear?  
Need to send an urgent message to a deployment location?

### Deployment Support Services are here for you

All personnel on deployment and their families have the support of the Deployment Services Officers (DSOs). In addition there is support from Unit Points of Contact (UPOC) and local Welfare Support Services. The nominated Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) of families of deployed NZDF personnel should, in the first instance, contact their DSO who has a responsibility for transparency into welfare issues.

#### Deployment Services Officers:

**Linton**—Janine Burton  
Ph: 0800 683 77 327

**Burnham**—Carol Voyce  
Ph: 0800 337 569

Added to this, there are other very valuable support networks available in your local region.

For additional support and services:

#### Army:

##### Defence Community Facilitators:

##### Waiouru:

Carolyn Hyland—Ph 06 387 5531

##### Papakura:

Ph: 09 296 5744

##### Burnham:

Kathryn Hodgkinson

Ph: 03 363 0322

##### Linton:

Lesley Clutterbuck—Ph: 06 351 9970

##### Trentham :

Christine Grant—Ph: 04 527 5029

#### Air Force:

##### Defence Community Facilitators:

##### Air Staff Wellington:

Linley Williams—Ph: 04 496 0555

##### Base Auckland:

Kylie Smedley  
Ph: 09 417 7000, xtn 7035

##### Base Woodbourne:

Claudia Ayling—Ph: 03 577 1177

##### Base Ohakea:

Bridget Williams—Ph: 06 351 5640

#### Navy Community

##### Organisation:

Ph: 09 445 5534, 0800 NAVYHELP  
nib@nzdf.mil.nz

#### Local Chaplaincy Services

#### Unit Point of Contact



## CHAP James Molony

Linton Military Camp

**C**ompliments of the season to all of you doing the hard Mahi either abroad or at home, but a long way from the close connections we all come to value at this time of the year.

We all know deployments...and military life in general, can take its toll on relationships. Largely because of the separation of time and distance but also because of the pace we work.

Being apart though can give you the opportunity to talk about things that get lost in the 'busy' of normal life, maybe even to learn something about each other you didn't know.

A powerful connector of good relationships can be your spiritual beliefs, something all of us have, but sometimes we hold those cards close to our chest, even from our most intimate partners! So below are some conversation starters just to help you out 😊

- ◆ What holidays (holy days) and rituals does your family observe? And what do you find personally meaningful?
- ◆ Does your spiritual life affect your values and the decisions you make and to what extent do you/would you like to integrate your faith or spiritual life into your marriage /

relationship / Children?

- ◆ What do you believe is the meaning of life?

That last one should be interesting...



At the very first Christmas, when Christ was born the Angel's appeared to shepherds singing 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind' – this message was about peace between God and man. Wars will continue and the world will be still be unsettled - until God wraps it all up. But peace between us and God is possible because of Christmas day.

May God bless you and keep you safe, wherever this message finds you this season.

*Kia noho a Ihowa ki a koutou, Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki*

# WHEN NOT TO BUY A HOME



## 11 Quick-fire Situations When You Should NOT Buy a Home

Buying a house, especially when you're younger is still an incredibly smart financial decision in the majority of cases. Home ownership is accepted as the cornerstone of wealth for most New Zealanders, with a debt-free home by retirement being the most common life goal.

On the flipside, society is changing and there have never been more choices for Kiwis to build wealth too.

So here is a quick-fire list of 11 instances when you should NOT buy a home.

### 1. You have other life priorities.

Travel, having kids early, or just not being tied down might be your focus for the time-being.

Some people say apartments are a good choice for people who are always on the go, either due to their work or because they just like to travel. But what about body corporate fees? – the monthly payment for services that you might be hardly using. That could be a huge waste of money if you're rarely at home – shorter term accommodation, housesitting, or flatting are probably better ideas.

### 2. You have no down payment.

If you haven't saved up enough, you're not ready to buy. Staying with family or flatting with others could be the simplest way to cut expenses and save more of your pay cheque.

### 3. Everyone else is doing it.

This is never a good reason to do anything! When making any decision, it is a common impulse to look and see what others are doing. Nevertheless, it is often unclear whether the path that

everyone else may be following is good for you as well. After all, sometimes following the crowd has merit — at other times, it is simply peer pressure blinding us.

Always do what's right for you and your specific situation.

### 4. Poor credit rating, or an inability to service the mortgage requested.

A poor rating score can make it difficult to secure a mortgage. If this is the case, it is better to try and improve your rating by reconsidering your finances and the management of it.

### 5. You have high debts or other bills.

If you must borrow to live your current lifestyle, can you really afford another large debt?

You probably cannot afford to add a mortgage payment to your monthly debt if your other bills eat up 50% of your gross income every month. Lender guidelines have changed over recent years, so your cashflow management is king when it comes to

obtaining a mortgage approval – the banks will “stress test” the numbers to ensure you can survive interest rates much higher than current levels too!

### 6. You're unsure about long-term commitment.

When you have 30 years of debt payments (i.e. – a mortgage), you can't pack up and leave for that trip-of-a-lifetime to Thailand, presuming that Covid subsides sometime soon.

If your life plans are still 'up the air' renting is probably the best until you've figured out where you want to be, and what you want to achieve in life.

### 7. You have other investment priorities.

Owning a home might leave you vulnerable to unpredictable expenses and distractions that eat away at what's left to invest. This might not matter for most people, but if you're a small business owner who's investing all you can in your own business, then the last thing you want is unexpected house maintenance expenses, or the need to tie up large amounts of funds for a

down payment – a steady rent payment is a much wiser idea.

This might apply to education too. Most medical students should focus on meeting course costs so they can obtain a medical doctorate, not a down payment on a home. Of course, after graduating the medical doctor should soon be earning enough to afford a few homes!

### 8. Little or no job security.

Now isn't a good time to buy a home if you have a reason to believe that your job might be in jeopardy, which can lead to missed mortgage payments, and at worst, foreclosure.

### 9. Moving around most years.

Buying a home is a long-term commitment. You might find that it's impossible to sell your new home in a relatively short period of time without absorbing a big loss if you're the type who loves the excitement of new digs and you want to frequently change your environment. *That said, buying a property that can become a rental might be a great idea.*

### 10. You're just not interested.

Does homeownership align with what is important to you or are you considering buying to meet some social expectation? There is nothing shameful about not owning a home – the ideals of the 1950s are dead.

Financial success is as much about making smart financial decisions as it is about tuning in to what's important to you. Homeownership is not the ultimate, and there are many ways to build significant sums of wealth. If you love non-property investing and are committed to it, then keep going your own way.

### 11. You're in an unstable relationship.

Single people buy homes, but a homebuying purchase is often made with a partner or spouse. What will you do if you're relying on your partner's income and support to make mortgage payments and that person leaves your life? Worse, NZ's relationship property laws mean they could be entitled to take half the house with them!

### The bottom line: when not to buy a home.

How did you go? If you've been

thinking about buying a home and none of these points apply to you, then get in touch by emailing [info@milestonedirect.co.nz](mailto:info@milestonedirect.co.nz) to see the free-to-you mortgage broking and other assistance we offer first home buyers. If you have ticked yes to more than one of the below, then right now might not be the time to jump into home ownership.

1. You have other life priorities.
2. You have no down payment.
3. Everyone else is doing it.
4. Poor credit rating, or an inability to obtain a mortgage for some other reason.
5. You have high debts or other bills.
6. You're unsure about long-term commitment.
7. You have other investment priorities.
8. Little or no job security.
9. Moving around most years.
10. You're just not interested.
11. You're in an unstable relationship.

*This article has been contributed by Joseph Darby, CEO and **authorised financial adviser at Milestone Direct Ltd.** This article first appeared on the Milestone Direct website. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of Joseph Darby and not necessarily those of Milestone Direct Ltd. The views and opinions expressed in this article are intended to be of a general nature and do not constitute a personalised advice for an individual client. A disclosure statement relating to Joseph Darby is available, on request and free of charge.*

#### How to get hold of us

Please get in contact with us with any questions about your financial needs. Feel free to call us on **0508 Milestone (645 378)** or email [info@milestonedirect.co.nz](mailto:info@milestonedirect.co.nz). There are no costs involved until an adviser has established your specific needs.



## A Special Christmas Message

T'was the night before Christmas  
He lived all alone, in a one bedroom house, made of plaster and stone.  
I had come down the chimney, with presents to give,  
And to see just who, in this home, did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight I did see, no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.  
No stocking by mantle, just boots filled with sand, on the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.  
With medals and badges, awards of all kinds, a sober thought, came through my mind.  
For this house was different, it was dark and dreary, I found the home of a soldier, once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone, curled up on the floor, in this one bedroom home.  
The face was so gentle, the room in disorder, not how I pictured, a deployed soldier.  
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read? Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?  
I realised the families, that I saw this night, owed their lives to these soldiers, who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world, the children would play, and grownups would celebrate, a bright Christmas day.  
They all enjoyed freedom, each month of the year, because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.  
I couldn't help wonder, how many lay alone, on a cold Christmas Eve, in a land far from home.  
The very thought brought a tear to my eye, I dropped to my knees, and started to cry.

The soldier awakened, and I heard a rough voice, "Santa don't cry, this life is my choice;  
I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more, my life is my God, my country, my Corps."  
The soldier rolled over, and drifted to sleep, I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.  
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still, and we both shivered, from the cold night's chill.

I did not want to leave, on that cold, dark, night. This guardian of honour, so willing to fight.  
Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure,  
Whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas day, all is secure."

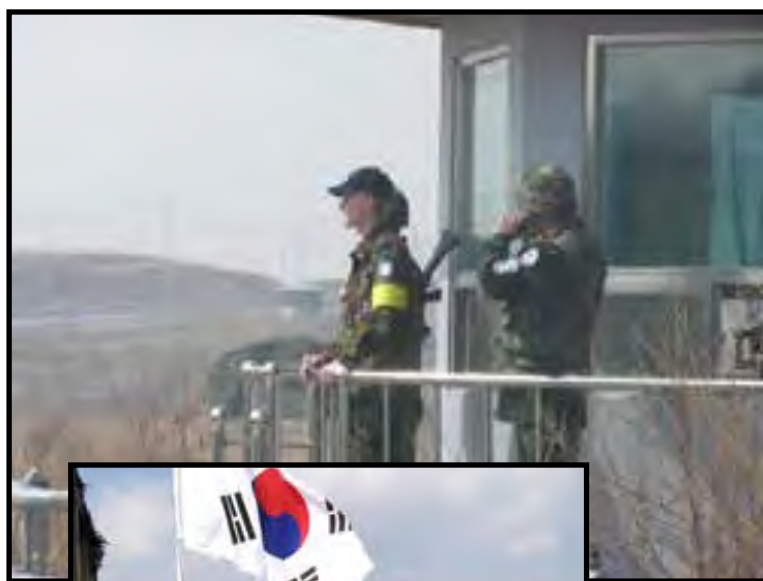
One look at my watch, and I knew he was right.  
"Merry Christmas My Friend,  
And to all a Good Night."



# LOOKING BACK

Over the years, and over many deployment rotations, we have collected some amazing photographs. Rather than just storing them in our archives, we are enjoying sharing some of these incredible images with our readers over coming issues.

These images are from the Operation MONITOR mission to the South Korea.



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# OPERATION CHRISTMAS CARD 2020

This is my favourite project and makes the end of the year extra special. Over the last few months I have been gathering together bundles of letters, cards and decorations, sent from all corners of New Zealand to spread some Christmas cheer to our service personnel abroad. Several weeks ago, some 800 items carpeted my office floor – complete with glitter, glue and pom poms. Every card and letter had to be checked. I laughed out loudly at some of the things children had written so neatly and sincerely, and felt extreme pride in the heartfelt messages also written with much thought and understanding. There were so many I wanted to share with you all, so I began writing them down – but after awhile I had to abandon that plan, as every contribution deserved a place in this Bugle article.

From my attempts to record messages (and jokes) the following are shared, (unedited) for your interest and amusement.



- I am so grateful you put your life in possible danger just to keep all of us safe, so thank you. Hannah (10)
- Did you know I have 2 sisters? One is 12, the other is 18. Very annoying. Addi
- What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney? Claustrophobia.
- I am very thankful for the people like you who are saving the world and protecting us. Zara (10)
- What did the cow get for Christmas? A cow calculator.
- I am very grateful for everything you have done for our country. You give up everything for me and for us and for this beautiful country. Ethan (10)
- Why was the turkey in the pop group? Because he was the only one with drumsticks.
- The danger you face each day is extraordinary. I am not brave enough to do that. Mindi (10)
- I think it must be awful being away from your mum for Christmas. I am sure you are brave though and will get over it somehow. Lucy (10)
- Why did Grandpa put jelly sponge in one ear and a glass of sherry in the other? He is a trifle deaf.
- I think you have made the ultimate sacrifice of leaving your family and friends for what must feel like an eternity. Thanks a million for your role of greatness. Edward (10)
- You have to keep the peace, stop wars, give people training, etc. We're really lucky to have people like you who volunteer to keep our country safe.
- Merry Christmas. I had an Uncle who is in the Navy and he has lots of Tattoos. I wouldn't mind being a sailor too but girls don't really look that good with tattoos so I hope you don't have to have them. Cindy (9)
- What did Santa do when he went speed dating? He pulled a cracker.
- I'm guessing there are no Pavlovas or berries where you are. I once heard that you will be in the trenches for Christmas and only get noodles or an energy bar to celebrate. Be brave and strong. Timmy (10)
- What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck? A Quacker.
- We are so lucky to have people like you who serve our country. I have 2 soldiers in my family. What type of gun do you use? Be safe. Toby (7)
- I wish there were no wars (Oliver)
- You are incredible. So brave and caring. I hope I grow up to be just like you. (Sebastian)
- Hello Soldier. I like your work. You are away a lot from your family and I know that must be hard. You do a good job and our country is proud of you. Thank you and Merry Christmas. (Jess)
- I want to know what sort of vehicle you drive and how fast it goes. Do you go out at night under cover? That must be scary but exciting. I hope you get a rest day for Christmas and that the next year is more peaceful for where you are. (Mark 10)



- Why does Santa have 3 gardens? So he can go Hoe, Hoe, Hoe.
- Why is Santa a man? Because no woman would wear the same dress year after year. (Kev)
- I think you are brave and kind. Being on the other side of the world and keeping the peace so we can all be happy is pretty tough. At least there are some good guys in our world. You really do deserve all those medals. We are very proud of you and I am sure your Mum and Dad think you are great too. (James 11)
- It is great being a Kiwi. We know how to help the world in tough times and you are doing your bit really well. Have a happy Christmas and come home in the new year so we can honour you. (Charlotte 12)
- I hope you look after your mates and can enjoy Christmas together even though your families are so far away. We will think of you missing out on all the treats and presents but be brave and next year you will be home again. (Tom 11)

Sincere thanks to the many known and unknown people who contributed to this project, including:

- Wellesley College, Upper Hutt
- Totara Club Enliven – Presbyterian Support. Nelson
- Kids First Kindergarten, Burnham
- Burnham School
- Burnham Nursery and Preschool
- Card making and Scrapbooking ladies, Tauranga
- Cust School
- Weedons School
- Rolleston 2nd Brownies

Your contributions will be enjoyed more than you can imagine – here's hoping you are one of the lucky ones who gets a reply.

This has been a wonderful project thanks to the many who wanted to contribute and send their festive greetings across the world. Our community spirit is alive and well and you have all made an incredible difference.

Sincere thanks

*Carol*



# CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Are you fascinated by the origins of Christmas traditions which have been passed down in our family through the generations? A Kiwi Christmas is quite unique and vastly different from our Northern Hemisphere counter parts. There are a number of traditions which we all are familiar with and which have interesting beginnings.

**Christmas Lights:** The idea of hanging fairy lights came from the need to have a fire safe alternative to candles on trees. In 1880 Thomas Edison hung lights outside his lab – not for festivity but to try and attract an electricity contract in Manhattan. The son of a light shop owner in 1917 developed the safety conscious light bulb and by 1930's festive lights became part of our Christmas décor. That's if you can untangle them from the previous year!

**Santa:** The story of Santa starts with St Nicholas, the patron Saint of children and a Greek Orthodox Bishop from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Turkey. He was known for his charitable work and secret gift giving. In 15<sup>th</sup> century Britain, the English icon of Father Christmas evolved. Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, Kris Kringle or simply Santa, is truly a legendary figure known to bring gifts to the homes of well-behaved children. Always an incentive!



**Fruit Mince Pies:** The Christmas mince pie can be traced back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Originally it was filled with minced cooked mutton, beef suet, carrots, raisins and herbs and spices. The latter coming from the Middle East. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was adapted to the mince pie we know today. Not on everyone's favourites list!

**Christmas Crackers:** These originated from the sugar and almond sweet – the Bon Bon and now complete with a paper note (or silly joke), a party hat and gift have become an essential Christmas table decoration.

**Christmas Cards:** Christmas cards originated in the 1860's and were originally flat and square similar to a postcard. In the 1920's they became folded cards decorated with holly, berries or other Christmas themes. Today the sending of cards is much less of a tradition than in previous times as people choose to send their festive greetings by other means.



**Christmas Trees:** The tree is now a major Christmas tradition around the world and comes in all shapes and sizes. NZ trees are normally pine or artificial to resemble pine. The earliest photo of a family and their tree dates back to Queen Victoria and their festive celebrations. Decorating the tree is often a family activity, with Christmas music playing in the background and the eagerly awaited placing of the star or angel on the top. (It's not such a family activity taking it down though!)

**Stockings:** The history of Christmas stockings is based on a number of myths and legends. A tradition which originally began in Europe when children simply





used one of their everyday socks placed on the mantelpiece. Today stockings follow that tradition created in the shape of a sock often personalised for family members. Often a sock is replaced by a pillowcase which is easy to put wee gifts into from Santa, but a larger challenge.

**Red and green:** The red and green colours of the festive season were demonstrated in the 14-16<sup>th</sup> centuries and are said to have come from Church panels. The colours really align with the Northern Hemisphere Winter – green marking the start of spring, new life and new beginnings, while red relates to the berries on the Holly, apples used as decorations and Santa of course.

**Pavlova:**

Who lays claim to this delight? We like to think it's a kiwi dessert and oh the best!! The



first Pavlova named after the Russian Ballerina Anna Pavlova, was originally a strawberry glazed desert, then a 4-jelly layered cake, and now that much loved marshmallow filling with a delicious crust. An absolute favourite!

**Christmas Dinner:** Beef and Goose were common meats in the early days until the Victorian era when turkey became common and still is. However now days it seems anything goes, with often a BBQ

replacing the traditional mid-day feast of turkey and ham.



**Advent Calendar:** This was developed as part of the Advent Season when in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century people painted their doors with the number of days until Christmas. This was replaced with candles and ultimately what we have today with small doors and a hidden treat. Another great Christmas tradition for young and not so young.

**Christmas Presents:** The three wise men brought gifts to baby Jesus upon his birth, but the exchange of present's dates back to pre-Christian days in Scandinavia where food was exchanged as gifts. Gifts as we know them today were one of the many Christmas traditions begun by Queen Victoria. In today's world, we are bombarded with advertising in various mediums, with



suggested gift ideas.

**Christmas Music:** Depending where you search for the all-time favourite Christmas Songs or Hymns, you will find a number of choices. Irving Berlin's song "White Christmas" has been a favourite since 1942, recorded by a number of different artists, closely followed by Band Aid "Do They Know It's Christmas?" (1984) "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World" take the top honours for the most loved Christmas Carols. For most, hearing Christmas music being played in stores or over the radio will signify the start of the Christmas Season.

**Boxing Day:** This day is often treated as the one used to recover from the festivities of Christmas day but it actually dates back to the 1830's when trades people, servants and errand boys were celebrated for their service to their "Master" with a Christmas box of food and money and a day off.

Whatever traditions you choose to follow this Christmas, enjoy your day, look forward to that contact from your loved ones who are not able to share this traditional family day with you in person, surround yourself with family and friends who are here and have a safe and

# CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

**In Germany, Poland, and Ukraine, finding a spider or a spider's web on a Christmas tree is believed to be a harbinger of good luck.** According to one legend, a spider wove a blanket for Baby Jesus, according to the other – a spider web on the Christmas tree turned silver and gold once the sunlight touched it. One way or another, decorating a Christmas tree with artificial spiders and spider webs will inevitably bring you luck and prosperity!



**Santa stretches time like a rubber band, in order to deliver all the gifts in one night.** According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), there are 2,106 million children under age 18 in the world. If we assume that each household has in average 2.5 children, Santa would have to make 842 million stops on Christmas Eve, traveling 221 million miles. Given the different time zones, Santa has 36 hours to deliver gifts, therefore his average speed would be approximately 650 miles per second. It is less than the speed of light (therefore, it's, theoretically, doable but still quite hard for a chubby old man).

**In Armenia, the traditional Christmas Eve meal consists of fried fish, lettuce and spinach.** Many Armenians fast for a week before the Christmas Eve, that's why, in order not to stress the stomach, the menu for the Christmas dinner is pretty light.

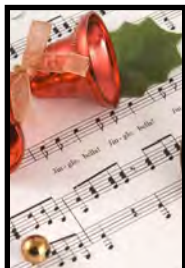
**Japanese people traditionally eat at KFC for Christmas dinner.** Although the percentage of Christian people in Japan is close to zero, every Christmas, kids and grown-ups head to the closest KFC to enjoy some fried chicken – the closest food to turkey that you can get in Japan. It's all thanks to a successful "*Kentucky for Christmas!*" marketing campaign in 1947. First aimed at foreigners, KFC offered a "Christmas dinner" that contained chicken and wine – a meal that remotely resembled the food expats and tourists had at home. After a huge success, Kentucky Fried Chicken started promoting this offer every year, until the fast food chain became strongly associated with the holiday season.



**The first artificial Christmas Tree wasn't a tree at all. It was created out of goose feathers that were dyed green.** The first artificial Christmas trees were developed in Germany in the 19th century, due to a major continuous deforestation.

**In Germany, *Heiligabend*, or Christmas Eve, is said to be a magical time when the pure in heart can hear animals talking.** They can also see that rivers turn into wine, Christmas tree blossoms bear fruit, mountains open, revealing gems hidden inside and bell ringing can be heard from the bottom of the sea.

**Iceland has 13 Santas and an old lady who kidnaps children.** Christmas in Iceland is a colourful fusion of religion, fairy tales and folklore. Instead of one Santa, the kids are visited by 13 *Yule Lads* that either reward children for good behaviour or punish them if they were naughty. The holiday period begins 13 days before Christmas and each day one of the 13 Yule Lads comes to houses and fills the shoes that kids leave under the Christmas tree either with sweets and small gifts or rotting potatoes, depending on how that particular child has behaved on the preceding day. The mother of Yule Lads, half-troll, half-beast, horrifying old woman *Gryla*, kidnaps naughty kids and boils them in her cauldron.



**"Jingle Bells" was written for Thanksgiving, not Christmas.** The song was written in 1857 by James Lord Pierpont and published under the title "*One Horse Open Sleigh*". It was supposed to be played in the composer's Sunday school class during Thanksgiving as a way to commemorate the famed Medford sleigh races. "Jingle Bells" was also the first song to be broadcast from space.

Source: [www.pastbook.com](http://www.pastbook.com)



## More Christmas Trivia

- ◆ Christmas Day is always on 25 December
- ◆ Thank Prince Albert for your tree
- ◆ Coca-Cola came up with the red suit
- ◆ St Nick was more generous than jolly
- ◆ Rudolph was almost named Reginald
- ◆ Washington Irving created Santa's sweet ride
- ◆ Favourite carols have complicated histories
- ◆ Mistletoe was believed to be an aphrodisiac

For more facts and explanations visit:

[www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/christmas-ideas](http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/christmas-ideas)



## Christmas Jokes

1. What do you call an obnoxious reindeer?
2. Why did no one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay?
3. What do reindeer say before they tell you a joke?
4. What do you call Santa's little helpers?
5. Why don't you ever see Santa in hospital?
6. What do you call an elf that can sing and dance?
7. What does Santa do with out-of-shape elves?
8. Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?
9. What do you call Santa when he takes a break?
10. What does Santa do when his elves misbehave?



**Answers:**  
 1. Rude-olph. 2. Because they were too (two) deer. 3. This one's gonna sleigh you! 4. Subordinate clauses. 5. Because he has private elf care. 6. Effis. 7. Sends them to an elf Farm. 8. A mince spy! 9. Santa Pause. 10. He gives them the sack!



# LETTER TO SANTA

Sitting down and writing a letter to Santa and then putting it in the post is a Christmas tradition for many families.

Messages can be sent to Santa online and NZ post have set up a new interactive website for kids to create and decorate their own digital postcard for Santa.

[www.nzpost.co.nz/writetosanta](http://www.nzpost.co.nz/writetosanta)

or post a letter, no stamp is required, but make sure you include your return address to :

**Santa Claus  
Santa's Workshop  
North Pole 0001**



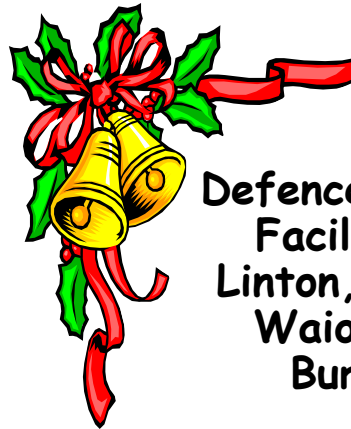
# 2019 CHRISTMAS MESSAGES FROM ....

From the NCO Team Members  
*Meri Kirihimete*  
Merry Christmas!

We send our best wishes to those personnel and their families that are unable to share the special day together.



*Mo te Tau Hou*  
Happy New Year



**Defence Community  
Facilitators in  
Linton, Trentham,  
Waouru and  
Burnham**

Festive Greetings to those at home  
and those abroad.  
Wishing you all a Happy Christmas,  
Peaceful New Year and  
a 2021 filled with all good things.

Lesley and Manda - Linton  
Dee - Trentham  
Carolyn - Waouru  
Kathryn - Burnham



To all of you faithful service-men and service-women, and to all you dear families enduring a Christmas apart from your loved ones, thank you for your sacrifice!

Special Season's Greetings from all of us Defence Community Facilitators (Airforce):

Kylie Smedley - Whenuapai  
Bridget Williams - Ohakea  
Linley Williams - Wellington  
Claudia Ayling - Woodbourne

# HOLIDAY CONTACTS AT A GLANCE

## BURNHAM:

**Carol Voyce:** Deployment Services Officer  
**0800 DEPLOY** (0800 337 569)  
03 363 0421 or 027 449 7565

Burnham Duty Complex: 03 363 0099  
Chaplaincy Service: 03 363 0463  
(Duty Phone)

## LINTON:

**Janine Burton** Deployment Services Officer  
**0800 OVERSEAS** (0800 683 77 327)  
06 351 9399 or 021 649 903

Linton Duty Complex 06 351 9099  
Chaplaincy Service 06 351 9634  
(Duty Phone)

## TRENTHAM:

Trentham Duty Complex 04 527 5999  
Chaplain Service 027 651 349  
(Duty Phone)

## WAIOURU:

Waiouru Duty Complex 06 387 5599

## PAPAKURA:

Rennie Lines Duty Orderly 09 296 6800



## DEVONPORT NAVAL BASE:

First point of contact for service families:  
**0800 NAVYHELP** (0800 628 94 357)

General Enquiries 09 445 5999

## ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE:

Whenuapai Duty Officer (DO) 027 450 0465  
On Call Officer (OCO) 027 450 0464

Ohakea Orderly Officer 027 472 3495  
DNCO 021 378 003

Woodbourne Orderly Officer 027 622 2480  
DNCO 027 496 5924

**MILITARY POLICE** 0800 50 11 22  
Select the appropriate location

## Holiday Coverage

All deployment and welfare support personnel for the New Zealand Defence Force will be available to assist you over the holiday season if the need arises. We understand that this is a particularly difficult time of the year to be separated from those you love, so if you need a listening ear, please be assured that we are all here for you.

Janine Burton, Deployment Services Officer (Linton) and Carol Voyce, Deployment Services Officer (Burnham) will provide 24 hour coverage, seven days a week throughout the holiday period. On occasions, Janine and Carol will divert their phones to each other.

The divert happens automatically but sometimes takes a few seconds to connect. Please do not leave a message as these are sometimes difficult to retrieve when the divert is in place. Text messages do not divert either, so just phone us again. Please do not hesitate to call if the need arises. (Contact numbers above and on the inside front cover).



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# HOT TIPS FOR CHRISTMAS

**S**eparation from our loved ones can be particularly difficult during special occasions like Christmas and the New Year, and it is not unusual for those of us at home to feel a little “out of sorts” at this time. Even when loved ones are at home, it can be a busy and stressful time – shopping to be done, pressure on the finances, kids on holidays, relatives coming to stay – some of us may find all of this a little overwhelming. If you are trying to cope without your partner, it can be more difficult.

There are some things that you can do to get by. If you do find yourself feeling stressed about separation this Christmas, there are some simple and common sense strategies that you can use to help yourself through.

## **Acknowledge emotions.**

Allow yourself to be upset at times. Christmas can be a lonely time if your loved one is away. Being lonely doesn't just mean being alone. You might feel upset even though you're with family and friends. It's OK to feel this way, and it is healthy to admit to and work through your emotions. But don't allow the separation to dominate your life.

## **Share the load.**

Try to talk about how you're going to those that matter the most, your family and friends. Also remember that Deployment Services Officers, Padres and members of the Defence Community Organisations are available to assist you. They can also put you in touch with external civilian providers if needed.

## **Watch out for the “shoulds”.**

Sometimes we tell ourselves that families “should” be together at Christmas and the festive season “should” be a time of happiness and sharing. Trying to live up to the “shoulds” can create frustration, anger or sadness. Try to accept your circumstances, and work to make them as positive as you can.

## **Think about yourself.**

It's easy at this time of year to forget your own needs for pleasure, space and time to yourself. Try to reward yourself with little things that make you feel good, and take some “time out” from your normal routine.

## **REMEMBER:**

*It's not unusual to feel their absence more keenly at Christmas when everyone else is concentrating on family and friends. Try to follow these simple strategies and hopefully, you'll enjoy your well-deserved Christmas holiday even more.*



## **Manage your time.**

If you feel like there are too many things to do, try making a ‘to do’ list, and set priorities in your daily tasks. Try to avoid over-committing yourself – occasionally you may need to say “No” to others to look after yourself.

## **Relax.**

There are many techniques for relaxation, from simple breathing exercises to meditation. Simply concentrating on and slowing your breathing for a minute or two can work wonders. Give it a go.

## **Stay Healthy.**

Sure it's Christmas but remember to eat healthy food and watch your intake of alcohol, caffeine and nicotine. If you can, get out and about and be active. Take up a sport, go jogging, walking, cycling or swimming. Allow yourself to have fun.

## **Share your time with others.**

If you are going to be on your own, you will not be the only one. Think about getting together with others who might be in the same boat, or volunteering your time to help those who may be less fortunate.

# FOR YOUR INFO

## Christmas in Deployment Locations

Every possible effort has been made in deployment locations worldwide to ensure that those deployed will enjoy some Christmas cheer over this holiday season. Santa is scheduled to call and offer some Christmas gifts and festive goodwill.

Thanks to The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association (RSA), deployed service personnel will receive a special gift of much loved 'Kiwiana'. Their generosity will bring a little extra Christmas cheer to the hearts of your loved ones and we thank them for their ongoing commitment to this special project.

## Expecting a Christmas Phone Call?

Everyone worldwide wants to talk with family and friends over the festive season and deployed service personnel are no exception. Phone lines, worldwide, are often overloaded and making calls may be difficult over peak times. Please be assured that all deployed service personnel will endeavour to be in touch with loved ones this festive season. Please be patient and understanding if calls don't quite come when you expect (or hope) they do, or are shorter than usual, given long queues waiting to use the few available phones in some deployment locations.

Everyone will do their best to keep in touch and you will very much be in each others thoughts.

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## Mail through DPSC

Mail to deployment locations, which goes out from DPSC, will not be processed over the Festive closedown period. Your letters and parcels for the last mailout of 2020 must be at DPSC on Friday 11 December for departing NZ on Monday 14 December.

Mail for 2021 will begin processing as normal from Monday 11 January 2021.

Mail may still be sent to DPSC during the holiday closedown, to be included in the first mailout of the New Year.

## Last Bugle for 2020

This is the last issue of The Bugle for 2020. We hope you enjoy our Christmas edition and the many articles, messages and contributions from abroad. Sincere thanks to all those who have helped make it yet another good read. It has been a huge task to compile and I hope not too many sleepless nights ahead in the hope that we didn't miss anything out!

The deadline for the next issue is **Friday 8 January 2021**. The Bugle team look forward to your continued support and contributions in the New Year. It is your contributions that make the Newsletter what it is — so be sure to send in just as many great articles and messages as this issue carries.

# WHAT'S ON—TRENTHAM

## Forces In the Park Concert 2021



**Saturday 30 January**  
**1600–2000hrs**  
**Davis Field, Trentham**

A fun day out for all ages with family & friends – Band / food trucks / kids' zone & more... Bring a picnic, BBQ, and shade if the weather is nice.

**Registrations to:**

Dee – [davida.o'connor2@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:davida.o'connor2@nzdf.mil.nz) (All Trentham Units),  
Chris – [christine.grant@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:christine.grant@nzdf.mil.nz) (All Trentham Units),  
Or Linley – [linley.williams@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:linley.williams@nzdf.mil.nz) (HQ NZDF, Wellington)

**Wristband entry only**

Wristbands can be uplifted from TMC DSSG / posted to you.



**A FORCE FOR  
NEW ZEALAND**



# RNZAF Christmas and New Year Events



## RNZAF Base Auckland

Village Green, Big Night In - Wed 9 Dec  
POC: [rochelle.rowe@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:rochelle.rowe@nzdf.mil.nz)

Kid's Christmas party – Sat 12 Dec  
POC: [kylie.smedley2@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:kylie.smedley2@nzdf.mil.nz)

## RNZAF Base Ohakea

Photography Workshop – 9 Dec  
Village Green, Big Night Out – 17 Dec

POC: [bridget.williams@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:bridget.williams@nzdf.mil.nz)

## RNZAF Base Wellington

School Holiday Camp – El Rancho 11-15 Jan 21 (8-12 yrs)

Registrations to: [AIRDCFVN@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:AIRDCFVN@nzdf.mil.nz)

(These events are open to all RNZAF Base Wellington welfare fund members and their families)



## RNZAF Base Woodbourne

Outdoor Movie Night – Fri 22 Jan 2021  
Registration to: [claudia.avling@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:claudia.avling@nzdf.mil.nz)



# PERSONAL MESSAGES

The deadline for contributions and personal messages for The Bugle is the first Monday of each month (**the next edition deadline is 8 January 2021 at 4.00pm**). Please note: All Bugle messages are to be sent to Carol Voyce, DSO Burnham (email: dso.burnham@xtra.co.nz)



## From In-Theatre

### To Wayne (OC Home Command), Holly, Max and Charli

I hope the move went well, you are settling in and the tree is up. Enjoy Christmas at the river and remember that sunscreen! I love you guys heaps and missing you more xxxx  
Love and hugs, Mum.  
PS: Give my Griff and naughty pup a big hug from me too!!

### For the boys back home (Madz, Carter, Cooper, and Axle)

Merry Christmas Fam bams, always thinking of you xx  
I am sure you'll have awesome school holidays. I am looking forward to hearing what you get up to, and all about your first days of your new schools!!  
I LOVE YOU ALL XX from Sarah/Mum

### For James & Chris

Merry Christmas Dad and Chris!!  
I hope you have a wonderful time at the Bach.  
Love Sarah x

### For Mumzy, Bobby, and Charlee

I cannot thank you enough for looking after my boys. I will be looking extra hard for something special to gift you all x Have a very merry Christmas.  
Love Sarah

### Greetings to the Tbay Clan

I hope this message finds you all safe, warm and well fed.

**Theia & Ava**, please hug everyone who is taller than you in our house for me.

**Caleb**, this could be your last NZ summer for a while so get out and enjoy it.

**To the flatties**, I'm grateful for your ongoing support and care.

**To my wife**, thank you, thank you, thank you.

I love and miss you all terribly. S

### Kelly, Brooke, Jayden and Jane

Jayden don't annoy your sister.  
Brooke don't annoy your brother.  
Both of you don't annoy your mother.  
Jane, good luck with your job you have to do for me.  
Merry Xmas!! Have a good holiday.  
I will be back soon. Tim.

### Dear Nana and Grandad

Wishing you both a very merry Christmas. I hope you have a lovely day and look forward to seeing you both in the New Year. Keep well and have a wonderful 2021. Love always,  
Paul W xx

### Mrs Claus

You bring so much joy and love to us all. Keep the spirit alive and see you in the new year. Love Mr Claus xx

### Son

Daddy wishes he could be there with you and Mummy when Santa comes to visit. I will miss you both and be thinking of you. Make sure you keep being a good boy and look out for something special from Santa under the tree. Love you heaps. Don't forget to give Shamus a big juicy Christmas bone. Love always. Daddy T xx

### Mum Dad and the others

Merry Christmas and a very happy new year. I hope you have happy days at the bach and enjoy the sun, surf and sunshine. Keep up all the traditions and go easy on the spuds. Troy

### Little Princess Gina

I hope you have a happy Christmas which is full of surprises and fun days. I will miss seeing you open your presents and the joy the day will bring to you all. Happy times and happy holidays, Daddy xxx

### Dear Lucy, Shaun and Lily

Sending you lots of Christmas wishes and joy. Have a special day and then enjoy the holidays. Well done to you all for a great year at school.  
Love Dad xxoo

**Christmas messages have been videoed from many of our deployment locations. Please keep a look out for these across the NZDF social media platforms, especially Facebook and Instagram in the days leading up to Christmas. Hopefully you will see a familiar face or two.**

## From Home




### Dear Dad (Harley)

Merry Christmas. We hope you are having fun over there. Have you seen any turtles yet? If so, can you please take a photo for me.

Love Isabella

### Merry Christmas Dobby

I love you Dobby.




Buy me lots of presents.  The Dubai Mall.

### To Blair from all your family:

Nana and Pop, Ma and Pa, Bros and Sis-in-laws and nephews.

We miss you and send all our

Christmas Love. Keep safe and  Ho

Ho Ho Merry Christmas   

### Opa Bart You Are Awesome

We don't really know what you do or where you are and it's hard for us to understand how long you are going to be away for but we wanted you to know we love you very, very much and we miss you more than ever. We give Nana extra hugs for you too. We love you bigger than the biggest ever dinosaur.

Lots of love Hayley and Bella xxx



### Dear Big Dadda

Wishing you a very 'MERRY CHRISTMAS' over there!

We hope that our package gets to you in time for Christmas Day and that it does not arrive in one big melted mess. Please don't stress ... we didn't send your Christmas T-shirt as we didn't want to run the risk of it getting lost! LOL!!!

We will be thinking of you Dadda and we LYTTMAB.

All our love, big hugs and kisses, Charlie, Dog and Mumma xxx

### Hi Mike

Merry Christmas to my favourite son in law. Will have a couple of cold ones for you.

Big hugs from "The old trout".

### My dearest Tim Tewake

I am still trying at our little bet we made ... Persistence, Persistence, Persistence.

Love Jane

PS: Get your wallet out Timmy, it's going to be an expensive night!



### Hi Mum

Weather has been good here, we have been good, unsure why Dad has to yell all the time.

We can't wait for more presents from you.

We miss you every day and are always in our thoughts.

Keep doing an awesome job.

Love you so much.

Cooper, Hunter & Zac

### To Johnny

Sad that we didn't get to see you before you left. Love you and miss you. Graeme says, "keep safe and enjoy Christmas as best you can".

All our love, Mum

### Happy 50th BJ

Will all be thinking of you on 13 December, Love Mum, Deborah and Adrienne.



### Hi Dad

I hope you have an awesome 50TH (!!!) birthday on the 13th and a really cool Christmas in South Korea!! Be careful of those landmines when you're playing golf. Lots of love from your 3 amazing boys. H, W, O.

### Hi Dad / Jae

We miss you a lot but we think it is wonderful that you are truly having a White Christmas this year! What a once in a lifetime experience. We are very proud of you. Hopefully Santa will make his way to Antarctica this year to see you. We will talk to you on Christmas Day and find out.

Love from Natalie, Isaac, Freya, Sully and Shuffle xxxxx



### Nathan

Merry Christmas and a very happy birthday from everyone here. Have a great day and a special New Year's Eve birthday .

Love you Mum xx

### Dear Uncle Marky

We miss you lots and lots. We hope you are having fun where you are. We did our dancing show over the weekend. It was so much fun and Ella got a trophy. We danced really well. We are going to miss you playing with us on the beach this year but Mummy said she will build us some sandcastles and we can send you a photo.

Merry Christmas Love Ella and Chloe

### Hi Dad

We hope you have a happy Christmas over there and that you get to have a nice day. We will be thinking of you and hope that we get a chance to see you on Skype. We have figured out that Santa will come to New Zealand before he gets to you. We will be having Christmas dinner with Granny and Poppa and all our cousins. It should be fun and hoping the sun will shine so we can swim in the pool and play cricket. Lots of love and merry Christmas from Tyler, Anna and Scott.

# The Night Before Christmas — Kiwi Style

T'was the night before Christmas, and all round the bach  
Not a possum was stirring; not one could we catch.  
We'd left on the table a meat pie and beer,  
In hopes that Santa Claus soon would be here.  
We children were snuggled up in our bunk beds,  
While dreams of pavlova danced in our heads;  
And Mum in her nightie, and Dad in his shorts,  
Had just settled down to watch TV sports  
When outside the bach such a hoo-ha arose,  
I woke up at once from my wonderful doze.  
I ran straight to the sliding door, looking about,  
Jumped out on the deck, and let out a shout!  
The fairy lights Dad had strung up around the door  
Let me see everything down to the shore.  
And what did I see, when I took a peep?  
But a miniature tractor and eight tiny sheep.  
With a little old driver, his dog on his knee.  
I knew at once who this joker might be.  
He patted his dog, and in a voice not unkind,  
Cried "Good on ya, boy! Now, GIT IN BEHIND!  
"Now, Flossy! now, Fluffy! now Shaun and Shanel!  
On, Bossy! on, Buffy! on, Jason and Wayne!

Up that red tree, to the top of the bach!  
But mind you don't trample the vegetable patch."  
So up on the roof those sheep quickly flew,  
With the tractor of toys, Santa and his dog too.  
As my sister awoke and I turned around,  
In through the window he came with a bound.  
He wore a black singlet and little white shorts,

And stuck on his feet were gumboots of course;  
A sackful of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a postie just opening his pack.  
His eyes-bright as paua shell -oh, how they twinkled!  
Like an old tuatara, his skin was all wrinkled!  
He had a wide face and a round, fat tummy,  
That looked like he'd eaten lots that was yummy.  
He spoke not a word, but got down on one knee,  
And placed a cricket set under the tree,  
A present for Sis, one for Dad, one for Mum,  
Then he turned and he winked and held up his thumb.  
He jumped on his tractor, to his dog gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew, as fast as a missile.  
I called out "Thanks," as he flew past the gate.  
He called back:

"Kia ora to all, and good on ya, mate"

