

WT 18/5/66

30 September 1966

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship WAIKATO from the 13th of June, 1963 to 30 September 1966.

The following dates give an indication of progress while the ship was in the hands of Messrs Harland and Wolff Ltd at Belfast.

13 th June, 1963.	Contract for F.S.A N.Z. 301 placed with Messrs Harland and Wolff Ltd
10 th January, 1964.	First section of keel laid.
18 th February, 1965.	Launched by Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra.
31 st May, 1966.	First Basin Trial.
21 st June – 1 st July, 1966.	Contractors Sea Trials.
29 th July - 9 th August, 1966.	Final Docking.
29 th August - 30 th August 1966.	Final Machinery Trials.
13 th September, 1966.	Commodore Superintendent Contract Built Ships Final Inspection.
14 th September - 15 th September, 1966.	Store Ship
14 th September, 1966.	Ship's Company moved onboard.
16 th September, 1966.	Commissioning Ceremony.
19 th September, 1966.	Machinery Demonstration. Signing of Acceptance Form.

A number of the ships early problems arose as a result of the geographical isolation of Belfast. A vast quantity of stores, some essential, coming from England and Scotland arrived late and in some cases not at all. This situation was, of course aggravated by the "Seaman Strike" in June and July, 1966.

Accommodation in Belfast for some thirty odd key personnel was arranged privately through the local papers and was generally of a high standard. No complaints were received from the temporary lodgers. The larger numbers of Ship's Company arriving in Portsmouth in July and August posed a separate problem. These ratings were initially billeted in the Royal Naval Barracks HMS VICTORY. In sub standard accommodation where poor food was a constant cause for complaint. Pre-Commissioning Training and Command Team Training took place during July and August at the various schools of the Portsmouth Command but there followed a period

of four weeks from mid August to mid September, when because of financial constraints no official courses could be arranged. Some useful employment was, however arranged at Sub-Specialist Schools and most seaman rates spent time at the Command Seamanship School. Visits to Ships and Establishments were arranged where-ever possible.

During the week or so before Commissioning, Ship's Company arriving in Belfast on RNZAF flights were accommodated at Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn the Headquarters of the 39th Infantry Brigade. A full programme of instructional films and sport occupied the time until 14th September when all hands moved onboard and the ship became alive for the first time. A concentrated effort enabled storing to be completed on the 14th and 15th September and helped in settling and integrating the ship's company.

"WAIKATO" was commissioned at 1130 on the 16th September. 1966 at Stormont Wharf, Belfast on a fortunately fine, sunny day. The ceremony went without a hitch and received front page publicity in the local newspapers. Coverage in English papers and on television was more limited. Appendix A shows a list of the principal guests at the ceremony and Appendix B a list of presentations received. A buffet lunch on the Flight Deck after the ceremony was popular with the guests. A cocktail party was held later that evening at which about eighty guests were entertained.

The Machinery Demonstration and signing of the Acceptance Form planned for Saturday 17 September was postponed because of minor defects until Monday 19 September. The programme of photographs, compass checks and full power machinery demonstration went well with only two exceptions. A main steam joint in the engine-room which began to leak, was repaired by ship's staff satisfactorily. Shortly after achieving full power the stabilisers jammed in the hard over position throwing the ship violently to port. Engines were stopped and the trial delayed for an hour while the stabilisers were centralised and mechanically locked.

On completion of a satisfactory full power demonstration at 1545A in position 166° Black Head Light 2.7 miles HMNZS WAIKATO was accepted from the builders. A short informal ceremony was held on the Flight Deck. The ship was then anchored by the ship's company for the first time near the entrance to Belfast Docks, and non-Waikato personnel disembarked. At the same time W.M. 2 Halse was landed suffering from acute appendicitis, the first serious medical case of the commission. Successful surgery was performed the same evening and the event received considerable local publicity.

At 1630 the ship weighed anchor and proceeded to a quiet anchorage, in Brodick Bay, on the East Coast of the Isle of Arran.

Tuesday 20th September, was spent on the Arran measured mile checking the log calibration. Results were not entirely satisfactory and some runs will need to be repeated at a later date.

The passage from Arran to Portland was uneventful in spite of constant poor visibility and continuous trouble with the stabilisers. A twelve hour, 17 knot fuel consumption trial provided the first figures for a fuel consumption graph. The ship came to anchor in Weymouth Roads at 0230 on Thursday 22nd September.

Ship handling was practised during the forenoon of Thursday 22nd when more stabiliser trouble was experienced while going astern. A helicopter transfer after lunch brought the Ship's Liaison Officer, Lieutenant Commander Lennox R.N. Of F.O.S.T's

Staff onboard for general discussions about workup. The afternoon was spent on the Degaussing Range. The results of this range indicated a requirement for deperming, and this was done in Portsmouth Dockyard on Thursday 27th September. A fueling at sea exercise planned for the same day was cancelled due to an unexplained defect on both main fuel pumps, and the ship was anchored in Portland Harbour for the night of the 22nd. A report of mechanical defects will be forwarded separately.

HMNZS BLACKPOOL was sighted on several occasions on Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd but her strict workup schedule did not permit time for more than a quick signalled exchange of greetings.

Results of noise ranging carried out at Portland on Friday 23rd September will be reported separately in due course.

On completion of noise ranging passage was made towards Portsmouth via Needles Channel in perfect weather conditions and the ship anchored at Spithead at dusk.

A formal entry into Portsmouth Harbour was made on the 24th September at 0830 when a 17 gun salute to the flag of Commander in Chief, Portsmouth was fired. "WAIKATO" berthed at the Deperming Berth at 0900 and reverted to 47 hours notice for steam.

Testing and Tuning has now begun in earnest. Although some systems are being delayed because of equipment non-availability, there is, at present no reason to suspect any delay in the "Operational Date" of 2nd January, 1967.

"WAIKATO's" sporting prowess already shows promise, especially on the Rugby Field. HMS WHITBY was beaten at rugby 51-0 but redeemed herself at soccer with a win 10 goals to 2.

BLACKPOOL's arrival at Portsmouth on Wednesday 28th September has encouraged a strict rugby training schedule in preparation for the long waited match between the two ships which will be played on Sunday 9th October.

Official Calls have been paid on the Commander in Chief, Portsmouth, and on the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth. Dates for return calls have not yet been arranged.

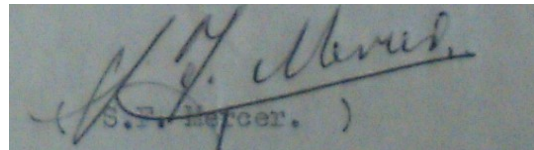
The morale of the ship's company is high, one notable contributing factor being the excellence of the food served onboard. It is hoped that the demoralising effect of eight weeks in inactivity alongside will be offset by a full recreational and training programme followed by "Workup anticipation".

The behaviour of the ship's company during this settling down period has been quite satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'S.F. Mercer'. Below the signature, the name 'S.F. Mercer.' is printed in a smaller, serif font, followed by a closing parenthesis ')'. The signature is written over the printed name.

S.F. Mercer
Captain R.N.Z.N.

The Commodore,
Auckland

Copy to:
The Deputy Secretary of Defence (Navy)
Navy Office
WELLINGTON

Appendix "A" to WT 18/5/66 dated 30th September, 1966

HMNZS WAIKATO – COMMISSIONING CEREMONY – PRINCIPAL GUESTS

New Zealand

Sir James and Lady MacDonald.	High Commisioner
Captain J.F. McKenzie R.N.Z.N.	New Zealand Liaison Staff.
Air Commodore W. Stratton and Mrs Stratton.	New Zealand Liaison Staff.
Group Captain and Mrs J.D. Robins.	New Zealand Liaison Staff.
Colonel J Burns.	New Zealand Liaison Staff.

Royal Navy

Rear Admiral H.H. Hughes and Mrs Hughes.	Admiralty Board Representative.
Captain C. Campbell.	Admiralty Master.
Captain and Mrs J.A. Hans. Hamilton.	Naval District Engineer Overseer.
Captain and Mrs G.W. Dibben.	Royal Naval Aircraft Yard Sydenham.
Captain and Mrs H.E. Smith.	HMS CAROLINE.
Mr and Mrs D. Biscomb.	Superintendent Naval Store Officer, Royal Naval Aircraft Yard.
Commodore T.N. Catlew.	Commodore Superintendent Contract Built Ships.
Captain R.C. Watkins.	Ex Commodore Superintendent Contract Built Ships.
Commander J.G Richards.	Naval Engineer Overseer.
Mr M. McMurray.	Warship Production Superintendent.
Mr and Mrs L. Vincent.	Deputy Warship Production Superintendent.
General.	
The Right Honourable, Mr Brian Faulkner and Mrs Faulkner.	Minister of Commerce.
Mr and Mrs J Whitlaw.	Secretary to Minister of Commerce.
Mr and Mrs J Bell.	Collector of Customs.

Alderman and Mrs W.D. Geddis and Aide.	Lord Mayor of Belfast.
Captain Sir Kenneth Sinclair.	Chairman Belfast Harbour Commissioners.
Mr and Mrs W.I. Clements.	General Manager Belfast Harbour Commissioners.
Mr and Mrs J. McF. Niell.	Chief Engineer Belfast Harbour.
Captain and Mrs G. Crook.	Harbourmaster.
Brigadier and Mrs R.H. Walker.	Chief of Staff, Northern Ireland Command.
Group Captain and Mrs B.G.T. Stanbridge.	Senior Royal Air Force Officer, N. Ireland.
Rev. Canon and Mrs E. O. Sheild.	Officiating Church of England Chaplain.
Farther Murphy.	Chaplain (Naval) Roman Catholic.
Rev. R. Gwilyn Williams.	Principal Chaplain Church of Scotland and Free Churches (Naval).
Lt. Colonel and Mrs R.S.M. Windsor.	Commanding Officer, North Irish Horse.
Mr and Mrs S.D. Fowler.	New Zealand Shipping Company.
Dr and Mrs D Rebbeck.	Chairman of Directors Harland and Wolff Ltd.

Wives and families of accompanied "WAIKATO" personnel were also present at the ceremony.

Appendix "B" to WT 18/5/66 dated 30th September, 1966

LIST OF PRESENTATIONS

<u>Article</u>	<u>Presented to/from</u>
The Holy Bible	"Presented to Captain and Ship's Company HMNZS WAIKATO by Archbishop James M. Liston D.D. On behalf of the Catholic people of Waikato".
The Holy Bible	"Presented to HMNZS WAIKATO for use of the Ship's Company from the national Council of Churches Waikato 1966"
The Book of Common Prayer	"Presented by Bishop, Clergy and People of the Diocese of Waikato to HMNZS WAIKATO on the occasion of her Commissioning on September, 16, 1966"
Silver Cigarette Box	"Presented by Harland and Wolff Ltd., to the Captain and Officers of HMNZS WAIKATO on the occasion of her commissioning at Belfast 16 Spetember, 1966"
Silver Cigarette Box	"Presented by the New Zealand Company 16 September, 1966"
Photograph of Ship WAIKATO 1874-88	"Presented to HMNZS WAIKATO by the Company on the 16 th September 1966"

Appendix "C" to WT 18/5/66 dated 30th September, 1966

MONTHLY STEAMING FIGURES

from 1545A 19 September to 30 September

Miles Steamed. 1230 miles.

Hours underway. 73 hours.

Fuel consumed. 154 tons.