

As I Remember

Excerpts from the Royal New Zealand Navy oral history archive compiled
by Kelly Ana Morey

Gambia went to the Azores. We allowed one watch to go ashore, and they were to go ashore from midday until 4 o'clock, and the other watch was

to go ashore from 5 o'clock until about 8. Jack Cameron and I said, "Well we won't go ashore first, we will go second and we will see what the place is like from others". We never got the chance. Some how or other they got on board, they were that drunk, we went and collected boatloads of people from the jetty and brought them on to the ship. We had people from other ships in our cells. The Captain sailed the ship at 8 o'clock the next morning and out of the way. Our watch never got a chance to go ashore. That evening some young sailor came around the corner from somewhere and hit me on the nose. He's never been able to explain why he did that, but he was full of grog and so were many others. I will never forget when we left the Azores, we had Captain's defaulters on the quarterdeck and I think I had about 400 bottles of spirits as evidence. Each one had a name on it and these were the spirits that had been smuggled aboard that previous night. They were charged in front of the Captain with each offence and I had to produce the evidence. Then to my horror the Captain said, "Throw it over the side", because by this time we were at sea and I had to go to the guard rail and throw these bottles one by one over the sea. I will never forget, I had come against one chap who had smuggled a magnum of champagne. When he had come on board he looked like the hunch back of Notre Dame. Because he came up and this thing was placed up the back of his jumper, and we took it off him, put his name on it, and all the Officers at the defaulters watched me throw this magnificent bottle of champagne over the side.



*Regulating Petty Officer
K.F. Connew*

HMNZS Gambia

I came back in GAMBIA. They broadcast over the loud speakers that we would get to Auckland a bit sooner than when we anticipated because we were going to do full power trials across the Tasman. The next morning up on deck watching for the full power trials and there was a shuddering and shaking of funnels and black smoke and all those other things that engineers do and we built up speed. Then all of a sudden there was a shuddering and juddering and then we stopped. The result was something went wrong down in the engine room or the boiler room and we finished up a couple of days late.

Able Seaman V. Fifield