



Commanding Officer HMNZS CANTERBURY



Commander Simon Rooke, RNZN

Commander Simon Rooke was born in Kawerau in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and attended Kawerau College and Rotorua Boys High School before joining the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1991 as a Midshipman. He has had numerous postings both ashore and afloat, serving ashore in HMNZS TAMAKI, HMNZS WAKEFIELD (Naval Staff), HQJFNZ (Joint Forces HQ) and HMNZS PHILOMEL. He has also served at sea in HMNZ Ships CANTERBURY (Frigate), TUI, WELLINGTON (Frigate), MONOWAI, ENDEAVOUR, HINAU, KAHU and the Offshore Patrol Vessels OTAGO and WELLINGTON, as well as a 30 month exchange on the Australian frigate HMAS ARUNTA.

Commander Rooke qualified as a Bridge Watch Keeper in 1993 and as a Frigate Navigating Officer in 1997. He has navigated the replenishment ship ENDEAVOUR (1997-99) and the frigate CANTERBURY (2001). He was appointed in Command of HMNZS KAHU during 2000-01, having previously commanded HMNZS HINAU during the 2000 America's Cup Regatta in Auckland.

Commander Rooke was appointed as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 1997 New Year Honours List in recognition of his leadership and performance as HMNZS CANTERBURY's Boarding Officer in the Arabian Gulf in 1996. In addition to that theatre, he has also deployed on RNZN ships to the operational theatres of Bougainville (1997/98) and Timor Leste (1999).

In 2002 Commander Rooke undertook the Royal Australian Navy's Principal Warfare Officers (PWO) Course, where he graduated as Dux of the Above Water Warfare (PWO(A)) specialisation. He then posted to HMAS ARUNTA as the Gunnery Officer and Operations Officer. In 2004 ARUNTA was awarded the Australian Navy's Otranto Shield, for Above Water Warfare excellence, which as the ship's PWO(A), he was very proud to receive.

In August 2005 Commander Rooke returned to NZ and undertook appointments as Staff Officer Maritime Plans (J53M) at HQJFNZ, before becoming Staff Officer Maritime Operations (J33M) until early 2008. As a result of his performance as J33M he was awarded the Chief of Navy Commendation.

After attending ANZAC commemorations as the NZDF Contingent Commander at Gallipoli in April 2008, Commander Rooke successfully completed the NZDF Command and Staff Course, graduating in December 2008. COMMANDER Rooke was appointed as the delivery Captain for HMNZ Ships OTAGO and WELLINGTON which involved accepting both of the RNZN's Offshore Patrol Vessels from build in Melbourne, Australia and bringing the ships home. Commander Rooke remained on OTAGO as the Commissioning Commanding Officer which, in addition to the numerous firsts undertaken as the lead ship of a new class, also saw OTAGO as one of three RNZN ships alongside in Lyttelton providing disaster relief following the devastating Christchurch earthquakes in February 2011.

In September 2011 Commander Rooke was promoted to his current rank and deployed to Afghanistan as a UN Military Advisor, based in Kabul. On his return to New Zealand he was appointed as the Commander of Personnel and Training for the Operations sailors of the RNZN; and has subsequently had his role enhanced to have Career Management responsibility for all RNZN enlisted personnel. He assumed command of HMNZS CANTERBURY on 20 November 2014.

Commander Rooke lives in Auckland with his wife Corenna and their two daughters, who through various sporting and school activities keep him very busy. In his spare time Commander Rooke enjoys playing and coaching waterpolo, as well as recreational boating and salt water fishing.