

Commanding Officer

LITTORAL WARFARE UNIT



Commander Matt Wray, RNZN

Commander Matt Wray joined in the Royal New Zealand Navy as an Ordinary Seaman (uncategorised) in September 1984, and subsequently specialised in the Hydrographic Trade. Matt spent the next 12 years at sea, punctuated by promotional and professional courses, in HMNZ Ship's MONOWAI (MON), TAKAPU, TARAPUNGA, WAIKATO and CANTERBURY (F421) also a period in HMAS MERMAID with the RAN. During this period Matt also qualified as a WASP HAS Mk I Aircrewman. In 1997 Matt commissioned as a Sub Lieutenant and after Junior Officer Common Training, posted to HMNZS WELLINGTON (F69) where he qualified as an Officer of the Watch and Officer of the Day.

In 1999 Matt returned to Hydrography and the Hydrographic Survey Force. He attended the Royal Navy Advanced Hydrographic Survey Course (2001-2002) in the UK, and then posted to HMNZS RESOLUTION (RES), the RNZN's primary Littoral Warfare and Hydrographic Support Ship, as the Hydrographic Operations Officer and Acting Surveyor in Charge. After RES, he assumed Officer-In-Charge of the Detached Hydrographic Survey Unit and a Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA) detachment. On completion of this period, he was advanced to Charge Surveyor. Matt joined HMNZS TE MANA briefly before becoming the commissioning Executive Officer of the new Landing Ship Logistics, HMNZS CANTERBURY (L421). In 2008 he posted to Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand (HQ JFNZ) as the Maritime Exercise and Activity Planner.

In November 2010, Matt was appointed as the Commanding Officer and last captain of RES, with the Ship de-commissioning in April 2012. During his time in command, RES was in a position to provide REA in the immediate aftermath of the devastating Christchurch earthquake, the completion of the LINZ survey contract, the location of the missing Fishing Vessel Easy Rider and a deployment to the southwest pacific for Operation CALYPSO. Part of this operation (OP PUKAURUA) included the mapping of explosive remnants of war under UN Protocol V, in conjunction with the Australian Defence Force in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea. The remainder of the operation was in and around the Solomon Islands mainly in support to New Zealand's High Commissioner.

Post command, Matt returned to HQ JFNZ as the lead Regional Maritime Planner before being promoted in January 2013 and taking up the Director Development position at Headquarters Integrated Area Defence Systems at RMAF Butterworth in Penang, Malaysia. On return to New Zealand Matt assumed command of the newly formed Littoral Warfare Unit in January 2016.

In addition to Matt's sea time, his operational experience includes: Operations Wells and Fargo (1987 Fiji Coups) in MON; Six months as a United Nations Military Observer in East Timor (UNTAET, 2000); and 13 months as a Force Field Liaison Officer and Second-In-Command

(including a month in command) of the NZ Contingent with the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) (Sinai, 2004-2005). For his efforts in liaison, he was awarded a MFO Director General's (Rome) Commendation.

Matt and his wife Mariane (Psychologist in the RNZN) have two young children. Matt enjoys keeping fit, reading and a number of outdoor activities.