



# The Magpie

Newsletter of No 17 Squadron (City of Christchurch) branch,  
Air Training Corps Association of New Zealand Inc.  
December 2015. Issue 08

## Welcome from the Chairperson

Welcome to 'The Magpie' the newsletter of the Unit Support Committee of No 17th Squadron (City of Christchurch) Air Training Corps.

It's been a busy month or two.

Once again 17 Squadron has claimed victory at Sparrowhawk, cadets spent a stunning Labour weekend at Arthurs Pass for Exercise Taiaha, we survived Cup Day, joined with the RSA on Remembrance Day and are now preparing for Final Parade. I am not sure where the term has gone to but we seemed to have packed a lot into it.

With Christmas just a few weeks away I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank the Unit Support Committee for all their hard work throughout the year. 'Support' being the operative word, be it cooking and cleaning for the camps, suppers for the various events, engineering know-how, photographic skills, man-power or financial assistance. They do a fantastic job.

I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous work done by Squadron Leader Cole and his Officers. 17 Squadron is a very well run Unit and this is reflected in its successes throughout the year.

## Support Committee



- Annette Pugh
- Neville Warsaw
- Neil Wech
- Ken Snook
- Edwin Lord
- Sharlane and Daryl Cotton
- Jenny Vallance
- Tim Graham
- Murray Debenham
- Kathy Wech
- David Hill
- Andrew Were
- Lindsay Sutcliffe

## Event Calendar

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Term Four         | 15 October – 10 <sup>th</sup> December       |
| Final Parade      | 10 December                                  |
| Exercise Red Flag | 12 <sup>th</sup> - 13 <sup>th</sup> December |
| Santa Parade      | 6 <sup>th</sup> December                     |
| Term One 2016     | Please check website                         |

Lastly, I would like to thank the parents for their support of both the Unit and their cadets. It can be tedious dropping off and picking up, suffering through the Thursday night ritual of early dinners, remembering hats and 3822s. At the end of the day, it really is all worth it. Read on to hear about Alex Abelentseva, an ex 17 Squadron cadet making the world a better place.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas

☺Annette Pugh

## Cup Day



This year the weather gods smiled upon us as all and sundry showed up in their finery at Addington Raceway to celebrate Cup Day 2015.

We had a great team on board, clearing rubbish from 12pm through until around 7.30pm.

The younger cadets were, as always, a welcome sight when they come in after the last race at around 6.30pm to do a final sweep.

Thanks again to all who helped, especially our volunteers from outside the Unit, the four members of 'Chorus' and Sarah Sutcliffe from the BNZ, who all gave up their time to help us out.

This is a fantastic fundraiser and we are fortunate to have secured it for the next four years. It saves having to ask you to do sausage sizzles or sell chocolate week after week.

Please keep this in mind for next year. If you are able to take the day off and help out it would be very much appreciated.



### Final Parade

Thursday

10 December 2015

6.30pm

You are cordially invited to

Final Parade

to be held at the Block

43 Corsair Drive

Wigram

Reviewing Officer



**Air Commodore Kevin McEvoy**  
**Air Component Commander**  
**HQ Joint Forces New Zealand**

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The RNZAF have shared this story about a former ATC cadet now serving as a doctor and officer in the Air Force. Now a Flight Lieutenant, some of you may remember Alex from her time as a cadet and officer with 17 SQN.

## RNZAF DOCTOR JOINS HUMANITARIAN MISSION



As the sole doctor for the 60-strong multinational humanitarian mission to the northern Cook Islands, Flight Lieutenant Alexandra Abelentseva, certainly has her hands full.

Up at 6am every day, she runs a 'sick parade' where soldiers come to see her for any medical issues and dressing changes before heading off to do another day's work on the infrastructure projects being delivered under Exercise TROPIC TWILIGHT.

"This is the first time I've been in the South Pacific so it's quite an experience working in a completely different environment," FLTLT Abelentseva said. "I have to watch out for new infections and creatures that may possibly be poisonous. Even simple things like putting on a plaster have become a big challenge as it does not stay on with humidity often approaching 80 per cent and temperatures in the high 30s," she said.

At the field clinic in Penrhyn atoll that she and a team comprising a nurse and three medics run, FLTLT Abelentseva also helps out with water treatment, pest control and waste management. "We are in a very isolated place, with the closest hospital four hours away by plane, so I have to keep a close eye on everyone and anticipate any medical problems. We see soldiers in our field clinic and provide medical cover on the construction sites. I have also been helping the local nurse, where required."

FLTLT Abelentseva said TROPIC TWILIGHT had enabled her to gain more experience and confidence working in an isolated environment. "As a medical team, we had to plan the equipment and medications we need to bring and draw up an evacuation plan. It was difficult to decide what to take given the limited space available but at the same time knowing that we will be working in a very isolated area," she said. "I've also enjoyed working with our Army and coalition partners."

FLTLT Alexandra Abelentseva



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## Sparrowhawk-2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October

Sparrowhawk is the annual inter-unit cadet competition based out at Burnham Military Camp.

Congratulations to 17 SQN Titans who narrowly beat 23 SQN (Nelson) and 26 (SQN) Oamaru to win the title for the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year! They are seen in the middle here being presented with the Sparrowhawk Trophy. From left to right: CDTCPL A Woods, CDT D Trenberth, CDT E Tham, CDTF/S A Vallance (Captain) CDTSGT S Langan, CDTSGT A Debenham, and CDT H McDrury. The Officer presenting is MAJ Gardiner, Camp Commander of Burnham Military Camp.



## Exercise Taiaha – 23rd – 26th October

The weather this year was stunning for Exercise Taiaha held at Kidson Lodge the Hawden Valley, Arthur's Pass National Park.



17 Squadron was joined by cadets from 36 (Ashburton), 18 (Avon) and 24 (Greymouth) Squadrons.



Cadets of all ages and proficiencies gathered. Basics remained at camp and participated in various activities whilst the Advanced and Prof Cadets went off on overnight tramps.



I am pleased to report that all returned safely!



Activities included first aid, fire lighting, bushcraft and survivorship skills as well as search and rescue.

Thanks to Neil, Kathy, Jenny and Annette from the support committee who came along to cook and clean and to Shane and Lydia for the awesome pancakes!



Thanks also to Kendell for her nursing expertise and to John Langham, Tash's Dad, who drove the bus there and back again and had a few intrepid adventures of his own along the way ☺



## Simulator Update

Great things have been happening behind the scenes regarding the simulator. The room has been prepared down at the block and the screen and monitor installed. Sean has ordered the PC parts and he and his boys are not far off the first 'test flight'. The seats and lining are currently being installed in the cockpit and we hope to have it all in place in time for Final Parade.



We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Sean and the team at Pacific Flight Simulators and to all the contacts and suppliers of Sean's

that have so very generously donated time, equipment and materials to the project, some worth thousands of dollars. The end result will be a world class facility that will enhance your cadets' knowledge and experience in the field of aviation.



Find us here:



[www.17squadronatc.com](http://www.17squadronatc.com)



[www.facebook.com/17SquadronATC](http://www.facebook.com/17SquadronATC)



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RSA



Lest We Forget.

For the Cadets and Parents who don't know me, I am the ChCh RSA Liaison Officer for the Cadet Forces and also a member of 17 Sqn Support Committee.

It's been a big year for the RSA with the opening of our new Building in Armagh Street in March. Members of 17 Sqn were heavily involved, along with Cadet from other Units. We are currently preparing for our 100 Yr Celebration, in mid-December this Year, as the oldest RSA in NZ.

The Cadets and Officers of 17 Sqn have also helped us out with several other events this year including Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. On Saturday of Show Weekend we also had 10 senior NCOS and one Officer who did table Service for the NZ Royal Artillery Association Reunion Dinner. By all reports, they performed well and were very professional in carrying out their Duties.

On behalf of the ChCh RSA Executive I would like to thank you all very much for the Support you have given us throughout 2015. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to working with the Unit again in 2016.

Cheers to you all.  
Edwin Lord  
ChCh RSA Liaison Officer