



# The Magpie

Newsletter of No 17 Squadron (City of Christchurch) branch,  
Air Training Corps Association of New Zealand Inc.  
2018, Issue 17

## 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.

Kia ora koutou,

As the end of the year rapidly approaches I would like to say a massive thank you to all parents and caregivers who have helped and supported their cadets throughout the year. It can be a tedious exercise dropping off and picking up every week but your children get so much out of coming; it is absolutely worth it.

I would also like to thank everyone who helped out with the Rubbish pick up at Addington on Cup Day and Show Day. This remains our major fundraiser and saves us from having to sizzle a lot of sausages!!

Our cadets once more did us proud, not only winning Sparrowhawk but also going on to win National Aviation Skills the week after. This was the inaugural competition between the best teams from Northern, Central and Southern regions, held at RNZAF Base Woodbourne. After competing for two weekends in a row, some could be forgiven for missing Exercise Taiaha the weekend after!

Our Parents Night in September was a great success, with guest speaker, Mark Melhopt, giving us a rare insight into the life of a Jet Pilot. LAC Holly Flood also gave a presentation on her trip to the NASA Space Camp she attended in April.

The USC have had a busy year working behind the scenes and this year provided the Unit with a new pop up gazebo, for use on the various camps. This will provide shelter for cadets either from the sun or the rain, a useful thing to have if the recent weather is anything to go by!

I would like to thank the members of the Unit Support Committee for all the hard work they put in, on camps cooking or cleaning, providing hospitality, helping out with different events, keeping track of emails and correspondence and sorting out the finances. It has been lovely to have so many new faces on board and I look forward to another successful year in 2019.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a restful break and if you are lucky enough to be going somewhere, safe travels.

Until next time,  
*Annette Pugh*

## Support Committee



- Annette Pugh
- Neville Warsaw
- Neil Wech
- Ken Snook
- Sharlane Cotton
- Daryl Cotton
- Jenny Wech
- Murray Debenham
- Kathy Wech
- Rebecca Sewell
- Graham Shepherd
- Carolyn Newman
- Lindawati Indarto
- Carolyn Yang
- Matt Blackwell
- Caroline van Zoggel

## National Air Skills Competition - 12th - 14th October by Joelle Cotton

The inaugural National Air Skills competition was held at RNZAF Base Woodbourne over the 12th-14th of October. The competition was made up of three of the very best squadrons, one from each area - 19 Squadron Auckland (Northern), 10 Squadron Palmerston North (Central) and 17 Squadron (Southern).

Since Alpha won Sparrowhawk, this made us eligible to represent the southern area at Nationals. The team was made up of the 8 Alpha members, two from Bravo and one from Delta, making a team of 11.



As soon as we won Sparrowhawk, it was straight into Nationals planning and tactics. After finishing on Monday, we had Tuesday and Wednesday to rest and study, then an overnight training on Thursday to prepare for the start of the competition on Friday.

We arrived in the afternoon to the base and were thrown into the competition. For the weekend we had one reserve for each activity, so we tactically chose who would sit out for which event.



First up was drill, which threw us out a little as we were used to having drill last and having much more practice than only the day before.



Next was GSK and TOETs which led to a very tense and stressful evening. Saturday was the main day of competition and was action packed from 0600 to 2130. In the morning we had shooting, then teamwork and rogaine, which is what we had practiced for and competed in on Sparrowhawk. It was hard to gauge how we were doing against the other two teams, so we had to just keep pushing and putting in 120%.



We then had the aircrew swim test, aircraft parts identification and rock climbing - which was one of our favourites. We were feeling slightly less nervous after lunch which brought the activities of the raft event, firefighter challenge and aircraft push.

We had no idea where we were sitting in the competition or how well we had been doing, so had to bring our A game to the last event of the competition - the mass casualty first aid scenario. Luckily we had help and training from a team of St John cadets on the Thursday, which gave us some peace of mind and extra knowledge.



The extra training definitely came into use and this was one event I was the most proud of with how the team did. Saturday was a long exhausting day and we all needed some much earned rest.

The competition was now out of our hands and as we had done everything we could, we tried to enjoy the rest of our time at Woodbourne.

Sunday brought more nerves. As the scores for each activity were read out, I remember feeling super happy and honestly a little bit surprised, as we were doing better than I had expected against the other units. As the final results were being read out, I still had no idea where we would finish in the competition, but was so proud of the team no matter what place we came. Being announced the winners of the first ever Air Skills competition was absolutely amazing and so surreal. We were all in a little bit of shock, and it didn't sink in until days afterwards.



After many photos with the trophy and our 12th member/mascot, Charlie, all three units were rewarded with flights in the A109 helicopter, which was a pretty cool way to end the weekend.

Nationals was one of the best experiences I've had in ATC so far. It was such an honour to represent the Southern area and to lead a team of incredible, driven young people. I am extremely proud of the effort and determination each team member has put in not only throughout the competitions, but the entire year.

The atmosphere and comradery of competitions is an experience in itself, and has given me a new skill set of leadership, teamwork and knowledge. I would also like to thank all of the officers for supporting the team, in particular PLTOFF Watson and PLTOFF Pugh for their hard work, time and expertise which we couldn't have done this without. We will, hopefully, be back next year with even more drive, enthusiasm, and experience.



## *Events since July*

*Formal Dining In*

*Frostybird*

*Ardua*

*Costume Night – see below*

*Sparrowhawk*

*National Aviation Skills*

*Taiaha*

*For more images see website*



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