



Commanding Officer HMNZS AOTEAROA



Captain Simon Rooke, RNZN

Captain (CAPT) Simon Rooke has been appointed as the Commissioning Commanding Officer (CO) for the Royal New Zealand Navy's (RNZN) new Replenishment Ship – HMNZS AOTEAROA, a role he will commence in mid-2019 in advance of AOTEAROA's commissioning planned for early 2020.

His current role is that of Assistant Chief of Defence Reserves, Youth and Sport, and prior to that CAPT Rooke commanded the Maritime Task Group during the NZDF-led EXERCISE SOUTHERN KATIPO in late 2017. He was promoted to CAPT in 2017.

CAPT Rooke was born in Kawerau in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, attending Kawerau College and Rotorua Boys High School before joining the RNZN in 1991 as a Midshipman. He has had numerous sea postings on various classes of ship, as well as shore postings in Auckland and Sydney, and to Naval Staff, Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand (HQ JFNZ) and Headquarters New Zealand Defence Force (HQ NZDF) in Wellington.

CAPT Rooke qualified as a Bridge Watchkeeper in 1993 and Navigating Officer in 1997. He navigated the fleet tanker HMNZS ENDEAVOUR and frigate HMNZS CANTERBURY before being appointed CO of HMNZS KAHU in March 2000, having previously commanded HMNZS HINAU during the 2000 America's Cup Regatta.

In 2002 he qualified as a Principal Warfare Officer (PWO), specialising in Above Water Warfare, graduating as Above Water Warfare Dux. After PWO course he was posted to HMAS ARUNTA for 30 months, where he undertook numerous deployments including four border protection operations.

He returned to New Zealand in August 2005 and undertook appointments at HQ JFNZ as Staff Officer Maritime Plans and Staff Officer Maritime Operations.

CAPT Rooke was appointed the delivery CO for HMNZ Ships OTAGO and WELLINGTON in mid-2009, bringing both Offshore Patrol Vessels from build in Melbourne, Australia to NZ to enter service. He remained on OTAGO as the Commissioning CO, during which time OTAGO was one of three RNZN ships which provided disaster relief while alongside in Lyttelton following the devastating earthquake in February 2011.

In September 2011 he was promoted to Commander and deployed for six months to Afghanistan, as a United Nations Military Advisor based in Kabul. On return to New Zealand he was appointed as Commander of Personnel and Training (Operations), before his role was enhanced to direct career management for all RNZN sailors.

CAPT Rooke was appointed as CO of HMNZS CANTERBURY in November 2014. During his tenure in command, the ship conducted major Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

operations in response to tropical cyclones in Vanuatu (2015) and Fiji (2016), as well as the Kaikoura Earthquakes (2016).

CAPT Rooke was appointed as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 1997 New Year's Honours List in recognition of his leadership and performance as HMNZS CANTERBURY's Boarding Officer in the Arabian Gulf in 1996. He has also been awarded the NZDF Commendation and a Commendation by the Chief of Navy.

CAPT Rooke graduated from the NZDF Command and Staff Course in December 2008 and holds a Master's degree in International Security (with Distinction).

Married in 1998, Simon and his wife Corenna have two teenage daughters, and are kept busy with their various sporting and school activities. In his spare time he enjoys supporting his daughters' water polo. When time permits he also enjoys playing social water polo, recreational boating and salt water fishing.