



Rear Admiral
John (Jack) Edwin Nugent Welch, C.B.
14th January 1941
-
12 September 2014



Beloved husband of Adrienne,
Father of Michael, Andrew & Antony,
Father-in-law of Victoria, Ellie & Rachel,
much loved Poppa of Duncan, Milla, Alice, Griffon, Zara & Harrison

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

~John Masefield~

RADM WELCH

A leader and mentor

Rear Admiral Jack Welch, CB, RNZN (Ret), Chief of Naval Staff from 1994 to 1997, was a leader and mentor who is fondly remembered by those who served with him.

RADM Welch died on 12 September, age 73. His service and remembrance was held at the Chapel of St Christopher, Devonport Naval Base, on 22 September.

“Everywhere he went people remembered him,” Chief of Navy RADM Jack Steer told the service. “He was just not the type of guy who quietly slipped in and then moved on. He made a difference wherever he worked. Since he crossed the bar I have received many emails with the words gentleman, fine man and mentor in them. That in a way sums up his contribution to the men and women of our Navy.”

John Edwin Nugent Welch was born in Wellington in 1941. After attending Rongotai College, Wellington and Kings High School Dunedin, he joined the Royal New Zealand Navy as a cadet on 11 March 1959.

His initial training was carried out at the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

He joined HMNZS TARANAKI in August 1961 at Portsmouth for the ship’s delivery voyage to New Zealand and spent the following year on board which included a deployment to the Far East.

He also qualified as a submariner to Reserve Standards in HM Submarine TAPIR before joining HMNZS PUKAKI for Operation Deepfreeze work in the Antarctic and a deployment to the Pacific Islands and Australia.

He was subsequently appointed Navigation Officer of HMNZS TARANAKI and completed a deployment to the Far East during the “confrontation” period in 1965 and early 1966.

Between 1966 and 1970 he was Executive Officer of the minesweeper HMNZS INVERELL, Officer in Charge of gunnery training at HMNZS TAMAKI, Commanding Officer of the fishery protection motor launch HMNZS MAKO and Gunnery Officer of the frigate HMNZS OTAGO.

In 1973, following service in Defence Headquarters, Rear Admiral Welch was the Gunnery Officer in HMNZS CANTERBURY during which time the frigate was deployed to Mururoa Atoll during the French nuclear test period of that year.

He was posted as the Midshipman Training Officer at HMNZS TAMAKI from 1974 to 1976 and took command of HMNZS INVERELL for a short period before being promoted to Commander in June 1976 and appointed Fleet Operations Officer on the Staff of the Commodore Auckland.

In 1978 he attended the Joint Services Staff College in Canberra; the Maritime Tactical School at HMS DRYAD, United Kingdom and in November of that year took command of HMNZS OTAGO.

RADM Steer, then a Lieutenant, served as Navigating Officer during RADM Welch’s time as OTAGO CO and described it as one of the highlights of his naval career.



“Like many other officers and sailors in our Navy, Jack Welch was our leader and our mentor,” CN said. “We felt that he cared for us all. We all tried to make his life as challenging as we could, especially me on more than one occasion, but he met all those challenges with a smile, mostly, and a supportive word. It is fair to say that I would not be standing here today as the Chief of Navy without the advice, guidance and support Jack Welch gave me over many years.”

RADM Welch was posted to the Naval Staff in August 1980. He attended the Maritime Tactical School at HMS DRYAD before assuming command of HMNZS CANTERBURY in January 1983. During his command, the ship was employed in Indian Ocean patrols as part of Operation Armilla.

He was re-appointed Fleet Operations Officer the following year and was responsible for co-ordination of the salvage operations of the Greenpeace flagship RAINBOW WARRIOR after French agents sank it in Auckland harbour in 1985.

He was promoted to Captain in December 1985 and became Deputy Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel) in Wellington. In February 1988 he was appointed as the first New Zealand Defence Attaché in Ottawa, Canada. He returned to New Zealand in December 1990 and was employed on special duties associated with preparing the 1991 Defence White paper.

He was appointed as the Chief of Naval Staff and promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral on 8 April 1994. He remained in this appointment until his retirement on 7 April 1997.

RADM Welch was made a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath in the 1996 New Years Honours List.

He is survived by his wife Adrienne and their three sons. ■

On 27th March 2015, family and friends of Jack established “**Jack’s Grove**” in the wetlands at CUE Haven.

Jack’s Grove is located across the boardwalk from “Duncan’s Grove” which was established in 2010 in memory of Jack’s grandson, Duncan Selkirk Welch.



The 27 Kahikatea trees for ‘**Jack’s Grove**’ were sponsored by –

- *Adrienne Welch
- *Mick, Griffon & Harrison Welch
- *Andrew Ellie & Alice Welch
- *Antony, Rachel, Milla & Zara Welch
- *Sue & Stanley Parker & family
- *Mary & William Cox
- *Broughton & Roddy Thomas & family
 - **Gordon & Madeline Stern
 - **Barb Cameron & family
- *Sandra & Hamish Simpson
- *Genevieve & David Becroft
 - *Tessa Duder & family
- *Thomas & Mahrukh Stazyk
 - *Roger & Mara Harvey
- **Sarah, Jim, Jennifer, David Welch & families
- *Ricky, Joan, Marianne & Elizabeth Welch, & Alistair Brewer
 - **Robert Welch & Alexandra Barratt
 - *Leonie & Somerford Teagle
 - *Ruth & Gordon Ell
 - *Robin & Denise Hulford
 - *Rosemary & Bill Sanderson
 - *William Stevens
 - *Rob Ellison & Eileen Slark

Additionally, in the bush not far from Jack's Grove, Golden Totara and Kauri trees have
been planted by Adrienne Welch in
1 golden totara tree in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021
1 kauri tree in 2019 and 2020
1 rewarewa tree in 2022



In 2021 Adrienne Welch gifted 3 benches which have been placed in the
Matauranga Platform which is in the area where the Kauri and Golden Totara
trees for Jack and grandson, Duncan, have been planted

