

OIA-2016-2602

18 January 2017

Ms Valerie Morse

fyi-request-5028-4b8d048b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Morse

I refer to your email of 29 November 2016 to the Ministry of Defence requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), [a]ll information regarding the decision to cancel the "1,000 soldier march" which was scheduled as part of the NZ Navy 75th birthday events, and [a]ll information regarding the involvement of foreign warships in the Kaikoura earthquake response.

The Ministry transferred your request to the Defence Force on 6 December 2016.

The 1,000 Sailor Street March planned for the International Naval Review required intricate planning and the cooperation of several different agencies, including the Police and Auckland Transport. The despatch of four New Zealand and three foreign navy ships to support the Humanitarian and Disaster Relief operations off Kaikoura, and the consequent withdrawal of contingents from those ships, required that plans be changed. To continue with the March would have required extensive changes, within just a few hours. That would have created the risk of unwarranted disruption to the agencies involved and to the public. Furthermore, at the time when a revision of the Street March plans was being considered, it was still uncertain whether more ships participating in the International Naval Review might be usefully deployed to the South Island east coast. So, even if plans were revised, there was no guarantee that additional changes would not be needed.

The decision was therefore made to replace the 1,000 Sailor Street March with a Service of Appreciation to thank the visiting navies for their immediate offers of assistance. That Service was also mindful of all those who had been affected by the earthquake, while recognising the New Zealand Defence Force and international navy personnel deployed to Kaikoura.

Invaluable assistance in responding to the earthquake was provided by the Australian frigate *Darwin* and its S70B Seahawk helicopter, the Canadian frigate *Vancouver* with its SeaKing helicopter and the United States Ship *Sampson* and its two MH60 helicopters. In addition, Japan and the United States each provided a maritime patrol aircraft to supplement a New Zealand Orion to capture imagery of the affected region.

The Royal New Zealand Navy ships involved in the Humanitarian and Disaster Relief operations were Her Majesty's New Zealand Ships *Canterbury*, *Te Kaha*, *Wellington* and *Endeavour*.

In total, some 915 Defence Force personnel were involved in the relief operations, as well as an Orion, four NH90 helicopters, two SeaSprite helicopters, a B200 King Air, two A109 helicopters and a Hercules.

I trust this satisfies your request for information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'G.R. Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

G.R. SMITH
Commodore, RNZN
Chief of Staff HQNZDF