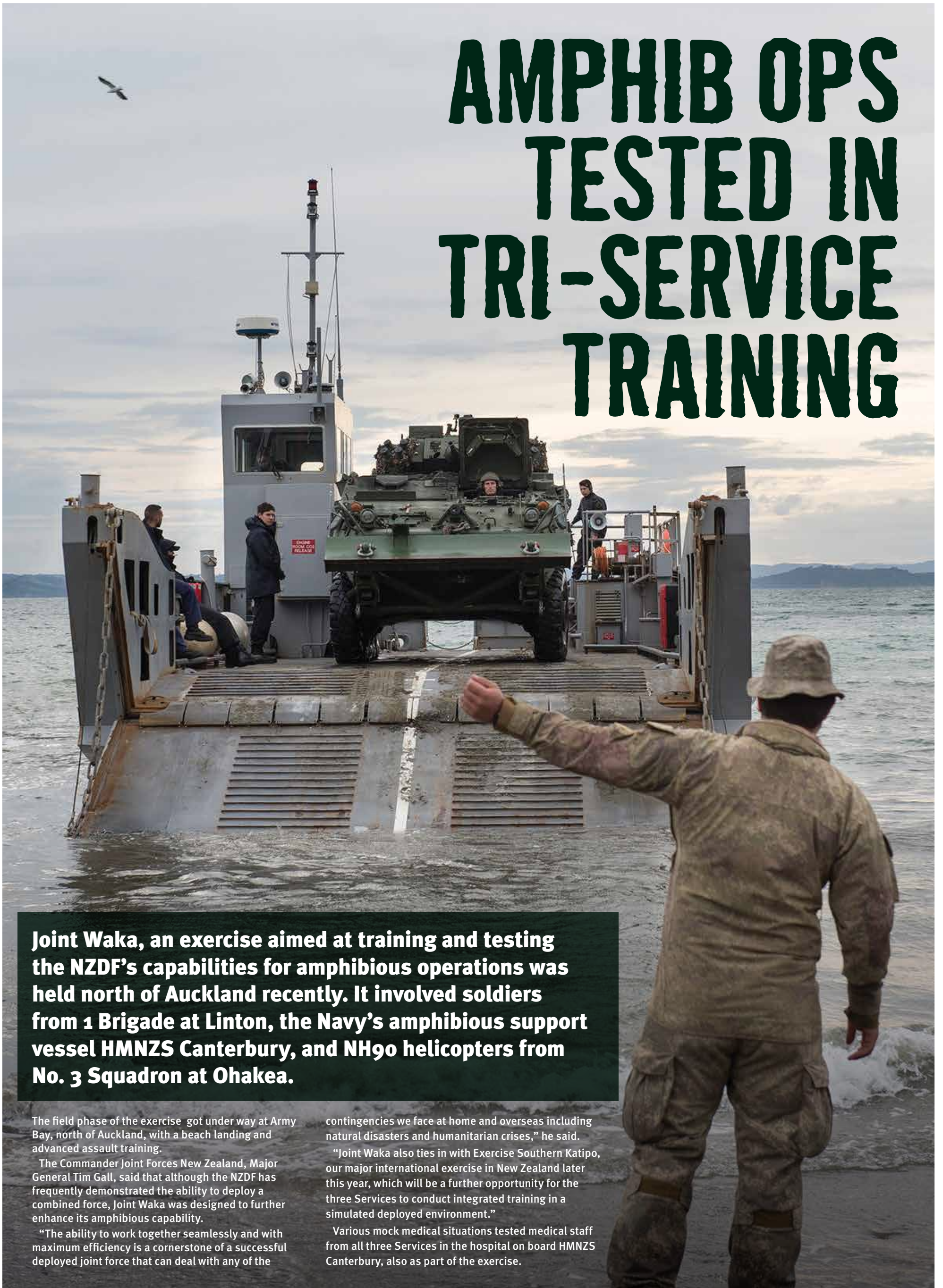


AMPHIB OPS TESTED IN TRI-SERVICE TRAINING



Joint Waka, an exercise aimed at training and testing the NZDF's capabilities for amphibious operations was held north of Auckland recently. It involved soldiers from 1 Brigade at Linton, the Navy's amphibious support vessel HMNZS Canterbury, and NH90 helicopters from No. 3 Squadron at Ohakea.

The field phase of the exercise got under way at Army Bay, north of Auckland, with a beach landing and advanced assault training.

The Commander Joint Forces New Zealand, Major General Tim Gall, said that although the NZDF has frequently demonstrated the ability to deploy a combined force, Joint Waka was designed to further enhance its amphibious capability.

"The ability to work together seamlessly and with maximum efficiency is a cornerstone of a successful deployed joint force that can deal with any of the

contingencies we face at home and overseas including natural disasters and humanitarian crises," he said.

"Joint Waka also ties in with Exercise Southern Katipo, our major international exercise in New Zealand later this year, which will be a further opportunity for the three Services to conduct integrated training in a simulated deployed environment."

Various mock medical situations tested medical staff from all three Services in the hospital on board HMNZS Canterbury, also as part of the exercise.



A medical team tends a patient on HMNZS Canterbury



An NH90 at work on HMNZS Canterbury



Army vehicles during the amphibious landings



An MHOV comes ashore...



... and then a Light Armoured Vehicle

Taking it slowly, and keeping your eye on the guide is the key to driving an MHOV or similar vehicle onto a landing craft in rolling seas, say the drivers who get this nerve-racking task.

One wrong move, and both driver and vehicle could be in very deep – literally – water. But even that scenario is catered for in training the Army provides its combat drivers.

Private Daniel Eagle was behind the wheel of a 77 (the HX-77 8x8 Enhanced Palletised Load System) on board HMNZS Canterbury during Exercise Joint Waka. He has been an Army driver for just over four years and has completed the manoeuvre before but in different vehicles.

“It wasn’t the best of days but I sort of knew what to expect. You just have to take it slowly, and think about what gear you are in so you don’t slide on the deck. You also have to keep your eye on the guide who is helping you and follow their instructions.”

If the worst happens, and he goes over the side, he has been trained how to free himself from the truck as it sinks into the ocean.

“We have done vehicle escape training where they put you into a capsule and lower you into the water. You learn what to do in that situation so that you don’t panic.”

PTE Eagle, from 10 Transport Company, 2 CSSB, says he enjoys driving in the various conditions his trade encounters. “Going off road, driving at sea, it’s quite fun.”



The exercise included various scenarios designed to test participants in realistic situations



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