

TOP RESERVIST SHOWS HIS SKILLS

Testing water skills



Signaller Caleb Butcher has won the New Zealand Defence Force's Top Reservist award.

He competed against 14 other part time soldiers, sailors and airmen to become the Reservist of the Year.

SIG Butcher works in information technology as a civilian, and entered the competition because he wanted a challenge and also to represent his unit (Reserve Sigs) as they did not normally take part in the annual competition which is usually won by infantry soldiers.

The Reservist of the Year competition was held at the Devonport Naval Base, and this year involved a number of activities normally associated with sailors, such as man overboard drills and seamanship, but also fitness levels, weaponry skills and military knowledge.

SIG Butcher says he trained hard for the competition, mainly in the gym, but also with hill sprints carrying a kettle bell. "Knowing the competition was on Navy turf there was also a lot of swimming and treading water thrown in. I didn't really have much idea what each stand would be so apart from working hard on my fitness I studied the military a lot, including weaponry, vehicles and key procedures such as first aid and safety."

He says he loves the opportunities being a Reservist presents. "Not only do you get the chance to travel and work with weapons and technology, you get to experience things that aren't available in the civilian world. You get intrinsic opportunities to develop as an individual. These have positive effects on my civilian life as an employee, a father and husband, and as a contributing member of society."

The NZDF has a total of 2355 Reservists across its three Services. Reservists play an important role in augmenting the Regular Force, and bring a diverse range of skills to the military as well as to their civilian employer.



VCDF, Air Vice Marshal Kevin Short presents PTE Butcher with his award



Fitness, maritime skills and military knowledge were put to the test





CDTW011 Emily Atkinson

CDTW011 Emily Atkinson (City of Dunedin Cadet Unit) has won the title of Cadet of the Year for 2017. CDTW/O Stefan Crabbe (No. 5 SQN ATC) and CDTWO Sophia Hilario (TS Achilles) were second and third respectively.

Cadets from all over the country made their way to HMNZS Philomel to compete in the Cadet of the Year at the same time as the Reservist of the Year competition was held. The competition tested competitors in a wide variety of mental and physical skills to determine the top Cadet 2017.

The competition began with competitors completing a Gun Run in which two teams had to carry logs, tyres and weights around Devonport Naval Base to assemble a 'gun', swim off a wharf, climb ropes out of the water, grab their equipment and carry it back to the start. During this activity the Reservists and cadets participated side by side, working together to complete the tasks.

After the Gun Run, the competitors were split into teams of five and rotated through the stands. They had to complete a man overboard drill which involved jumping off of a RNZN Inshore Patrol Vessel, retrieving a dummy, and then providing first aid to a wounded patient. They also had to work as a team to assemble a Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB) and row out and around buoys. Their memory and aptitude were tested by having to navigate a tunnel system in gas mask using a glow stick, and answer questions based on knowledge learnt at the Navy Museum. Their shooting skills were tested on the WETS range, and they also had to deliver a presentation to a panel of judges.

The competition concluded with a formal function and awards ceremony to announce the winners. All cadets received a plaque from the Vice Chief of Defence Force, AVM Kevin Short and CDTWO Hilario delivered her competition presentation at the formal function to all in attendance.



VCDF, Air Vice Marshal Kevin Short congratulates CDTWO11 Atkinson