

**Pattern: Bellona (C63), Black Prince (C81) , Royalist (C89), Improved Dido Class Light Cruiser;**

Introduced in to NZ Service: 1946; Withdrawn: 1966

**Bellona** Builder: Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering, Govan, Glasgow; Launched 29/9/42, Commissioned 29/10/43.

**Black Prince** Builder: Harland & Wolff, Belfast; Launched 27/8/42, Commissioned 20/11/43.

**Royalist** Builder: Scotts Shipbuilding & Engineering, Greenock; Launched 30/5/42, Commissioned 10/9/43.

Tonnage: 5900; Dimensions: 512.5 x 506 x 50.5 x 18.5 ft (156.1 x 154.2 x 15.4 x 5.6m)

Machinery: 4 shaft, oil fired steam turbines, 62,000 shp; Speed: 30 knots.

Armament: Guns – 8 x 5.25 in, 12 x 2 Pdr, 12 to 20 x 20mm many replaced by 4 to 6 x 40 mm AA guns post war.

Torpedo Tubes - 6 x 21 in; Complement: 550.



HMNZS Bellona



HMNZS Royalist

### NZ Service

**Black Prince** was in New Zealand waters in early 1946 and was transferred to the RNZN on 1 June, going into reserve, while her RN crew returned to the UK. In 1953 she re-commissioned from reserve after a major refit and sailed to England where she took part in the Coronation Naval Review at Spithead. On the return voyage she took part in exercises in the Med. and gave assistance following an earthquake on the Ionian Islands of Greece in August, arriving back in Auckland on 29 September. From 12/53 to 1/54 she acted as escort to the Royal Tour on the liner *Gothic*, and then took part in various exercises and visits to Australia, the Pacific and Singapore finally paying off in Auckland in July 1955. From August she acted as Reserve Fleet HQ and accommodation ship for others in refit. A further limited refit was undertaken in 1957-58 but by this time she was obsolescent and she was placed in permanent reserve in 1959. *Black Prince* reverted to the RN on 1/4/61 and was, after being partially stripped of equipment at Devonport, towed to Japan in April '62 and broken up.

**Bellona** commissioned at Chatham in October 1946 and arrived in Auckland in December where she became the flagship of the RNZN, her crew having transferred from *Gambia* and *Achilles*. She made numerous port visits and several visits to Australia as well as an annual cruise to the Pacific. She was involved in the waterfront strike of 1951 her crew working on the wharves at Wellington, New Plymouth and Auckland. In 1952 she sailed to England where she took part in a major NATO exercise, returning with naval stores and equipment arriving in Auckland in mid December. In 1953 she was placed in reserve as the as HQ Reserve Fleet and was refitted in 1954. In October 1955 she sailed for the UK, where her crew transferred to *Royalist*, and she was placed in reserve at Plymouth. She was sold in 1958 and scrapped near Swansea, Wales.

**Royalist** was provided on loan to replace *Bellona* with New Zealand paying for her modernisation and was handed over on 9/7/56 at Devonport. She arrived in Auckland in December 1956 via the Med. and South Africa. During her time with the RNZN she undertook many exercises with NZ frigates and foreign ships in home waters, made visits to Australia, Far East, Indian Ocean and the west coast USA. On return from her last Far East deployment in November '65 off Bellona Island in the Solomon Is. she suffered a serious breakdown when salt water contaminated her boiler water, and she was towed most of the way to Auckland, although one boiler was repaired sufficient to enter harbour under her own reduced power. After valuable equipment was removed she was sold and towed to Japan in January 1968 and broken up at Osaka.

*Acknowledgements: New Zealand Naval Vessels by RJ McDougall.*