

COPYEnclosure No. 4

HMNZS WAIKATO
c/o Overseas Mail Branch
GPO Auckland
NEW ZEALAND.

21st November 1974

WT19/7

Mrs. P.L. Spanswick
P.O. Box [REDACTED]
Suva
Fiji

Dear Mrs. Spanswick,

A letter was drafted in reply to your husbands previous correspondence but was withheld because of your son's sudden absence. To date we have not had any information on his whereabouts and none of the other young men on board admit to knowing where he is.

The Executive Officer discussed with Mark his intention of returning to Fiji and felt that he would very likely return to see you at Christmas in spite of your wishes to the contrary.

While it is within our jurisdiction to withhold permission for a sailor to go overseas, it is always possible for him to take the law into his own hands as Mark has done now. No final decision was given him before he remained absent.

It is unfortunate that Mark has felt such dissatisfaction after such a short time in the service, but the pressures on young people are often difficult to understand. I can assure you that he was given every assistance to deal with his problem in a sensible way, acceptable to both you and the Navy.

Whatever the outcome of the present situation I trust that Mark will soon realise his responsibilities and return voluntarily to the service. Should he arrive in Fiji it is necessary that he be informed that his actions have resulted in him being listed as a deserter, but the seriousness of this can be reduced if he returns of his own volition.

Should any information about his present activities or whereabouts come to hand I will inform you.

Yours faithfully,

sgd. J.O'H Tobin
Commander RNZN
COMMANDING OFFICER