



Anyone with information on this ship from 1984?



The Great Hawkes Bay Earthquake.

Hawke's Bay, New Zealand was completely redefined in 150 seconds during the 1931 earthquake, changing the relationship the people of Napier had with the sea as well as seeding new architecture. It began at 10:47 a.m. on Feb. 2, 1931 when a huge jolt magnitude 7.8 on the Richter scale, and just 16 kilometers deep, wreaked widespread destruction on a region that, until then, had enjoyed tremendous growth.

Napier was established in 1851, and by the 1920s, was a thriving town of 16,000 people, with a great number of brick buildings, including the Anglican Cathedral and the Municipal Theatre.

Hasting, just 20 kilometers south, had grown out of developments that began in the 1870s. By 1930, the population had reached 10,850 and the city was justifiably proud of structures such as the Hawke's Bay Farmers Co-operation Associating building, the Grand Hotel, Roach's department store and the Post Office with its tall tower. Other towns in the area were also developing - Havelock North, Taradale, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Dannevirke and Wairoa.

The day itself began innocently enough - hot and still. It seemed the best of starts for children returning to school for another year. But at 10:47, there was a sudden jolt. Thirty seconds later there was another shock that shook the ground, smashed buildings, and opened huge fissures in roads. In just two and a half minutes - chaos.

Cherished businesses in Napier and Hasting were obliterated. Wairoa, which was close to the quake's epicenter, was also extensively damaged. Fires began within minutes, and by the early afternoon Napier was ablaze.

Rescue workers sprang into action as all who could help ignored the powerful aftershocks and did what they could to aid the trapped and hurt. Unfortunately, Napier Hospital and the Nurses Home were unusable, and the Public Hospital at Hasting was too small to cater to the large numbers of injured and wounded. Many were



ferried to the Botanical Gardens and the Racecourse in Napier and Hastings. In all 258 died and countless numbers were hurt. Residents were left shocked, dazed and confused.

If there was one fortunate coincidence, it was the presence of **HMS VERONICA** in Napier at that time. In fact, it was the ship's radio that alerted those outside the region as to what had happened, because all other forms of communication had been cut off. The crew of **HMS VERONICA** was

dispatched to the devastated town to help with rescue efforts and set up emergency services. By early afternoon, two more ships laden with supplies had been dispatched to the stricken area from Auckland.

Over the next two weeks, people evacuated the region, taking what possessions they could recover, and the long clean-up began. What would emerge from the rubble would be new cities, including the art deco wonder of Napier.

This 20-stamp issue pays tribute to this huge event in New Zealand's history, to those who endured it, those who were lost and to the cities that have risen from the rubble in its aftermath.

(Earthquake, continued on page 66)