



New Zealand Defence Force  
Te Ope Kaatua O Aotearoa

## Media Release

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### **TIMOR BASED AIRMEN RAISE MONEY TO FIGHT CANCER**

Ohakea Aircraft Technician Murray Richmond walked for almost 12 hours without a break during last weekend's Manawatu Relay For Life. The relay is a fundraising event for the Cancer Society, but Murray wasn't walking in Palmerston North, he was thousands of kilometres away in Dili, the capital city of Timor-Leste.

Murray is one of the members of Ohakea based 3 Squadron Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) currently deployed to Timor-Leste where they are providing helicopter support to the Australian led International Security Force (ISF).

Over the last few years the Palmerston North event has attracted a large team of 3 Squadron personnel from Ohakea. This year Murray and fellow Aircraft Technician Nathan Hodgkinson decided that if the deployed personnel could not participate in the Manawatu event, they would have their own, in Dili.

"Five or six years ago the squadron was looking for a charity to support. A couple of squadron members had battled cancer and a lot of people knew of someone who had experienced the disease so we decided that this event was well suited for us", said Murray.

"It's a big event annually for the guys back in Ohakea and we didn't want to miss out on it despite being here on operations.

"We started at 8am local time Saturday morning and ran through until 8am Sunday morning, following the format of the event back home as closely as possible. We had a one kilometre track mapped out here at the helicopter operations base and

temperatures got up into the high 30s during the afternoon making the running challenging.

“In total we covered 692 kilometres in 24 hours and raised almost \$1000.00 through sponsorship from friends and family in New Zealand and donations from members of the Australian and New Zealand Defence Forces working at the helicopter operations base.

“Unfortunately Nathan got a dose of glandular fever the day before the event kicked off and was unable to be with us on the day but he was there in spirit. His nickname is ‘spanner’ and so we used a large chrome spanner as a baton to be passed from runner to runner and that way we could say that spanner was with us the entire time.

“It was great to be able to do this despite being thousand of kilometres away from home and to know that we were out on the track at the same time as our mates back in Palmerston North”, said Murray Richmond.

## **ENDS**

Currently 425 New Zealand Defence Force personnel are deployed on 15 operations, UN missions and defence exercises around the world.

For more information please contact Nicole Munro-Johnson, Defence Public Relations on 021 569 148 or 04 529 6033.



Members of the Dili-based 3 Squadron Relay for Life team at the start of the relay.