



Dear shipmates, families and friends

Wellington Waterfront Commemoration 2018



Once again we welcomed a fine day for the wreath laying ceremony , at our plaque site on the Wellington waterfront on 9 May to celebrate the end of WW2 and to commemorate those who lost their lives on the Arctic Convoys. Speeches were invited from HE Valery Tereshchenko, Deputy British High Commissioner Helen Smith, Captain Corina Bruce RNZN and Captain Lew Robinson MNA .

Wreathes were laid by the Russian Ambassador, Helen Smith on behalf of the people of the United Kingdom, Capt. Corina Bruce on behalf of the Royal New Zealand Navy, Capt. Lewis Robinson and William Pitt on behalf of the Merchant Navy



Association and by Chris King and Stan Welch on behalf of the Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand. Other floral tributes were laid by members of the Russian community. After the closing ceremony members who were able adjourned to a nearby restaurant for an enjoyable lunch.

Celebration of Russia's National Day



Several of our members joined dignitaries at the Wellington Club to celebrate Russia's National Day on Thursday 14 June 2018. Ambassador Tereshchenko (pictured left) advised that his tour of duty as Russia's representative in New Zealand was now complete. After five years in office in Wellington he has continued the co-operation, and hospitality, of previous holders of the position toward our club. For this we would like to thank

him and, of course, his wife Alexandra and wish them a long, healthy and happy life back in their home country.

French memorial unveiled at Pukeahu, Wellington

On the centenary anniversary of World War I, and at the invitation of New Zealand authorities, a French memorial has been inaugurated within the Pukeahu National War Memorial Park in Wellington.

The horizontal tabula presents Chant de l'Honneur, by Guillaume Apollinaire. This poem is part of Calligrammes – Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916) published the year of Guillaume Apollinaire's death. The tabula and standing form are made of local stone and crushed French Combe Brune stone from the shell-marked landscape of the Western Front.



"This memorial will be a piece of France in New Zealand. The monument will honour the longstanding bonds between our two countries, the shared values and aspirations that have shaped our history. It will also provide a legacy to the new memories we are creating today together", Florence Jeanblanc-Risler, French Ambassador in New Zealand

Beyond the tabula, the same sculptural form stands tall: Haere whakamua, titiro whakamuri. This Māori phrase broadly translates as 'walking into the future, with our eyes open to the past'. It reminds us that we cannot see into the future, but we can look to the past for guidance, thus echoing the poet's call for future generations to remember the human sacrifice on the battle fields of the First World War.

Arctic bound HMS Westminster salutes Convoy veterans

Earlier this year, in one of the most bleak and remote spots in the British Isles, a small party from HMS Westminster remembered sailors who made "the worst journey in the world" 75 years ago. This is Loch Ewe in northwest Scotland, marshalling point for ships sailing to or back from the Soviet Union during World War 2.



With the Portsmouth-based warship heading north for winter training in those same Arctic waters, the frigate's crew wanted to know what to expect. With its crumbling bunkers and decaying gun emplacements, Loch Ewe remains an evocative site – brought to life especially by enthusiasts at the Arctic Convoy Museum.

"Every sailor has deep respect for those who served in the Arctic Convoys, but having re-read their story and now that I am taking Westminster back through the same waters in the depth of winter I

felt that we had to take some time to recognise the sacrifice of all those who served in what was proportionally the deadliest theatre of war," said Commander Simon Kelly, Westminster's CO.

"The Russian Arctic Convoy Museum, manned by a team of passionate local volunteers went out of their way to support this remembrance, for which all in HMS Westminster would like to thank them."

HMNZS Te Mana deployed to Asia-Pacific

The New Zealand Defence Force has deployed HMNZS Te Mana to the Asia-Pacific over the next five months, as it seeks to strengthen engagement with countries in the region.



In the first stage of the deployment HMNZS Te Mana, together with more than 300 NZ Defence Force personnel and three aircraft, will take

part in the biennial Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, the world's largest international maritime exercise, held around Hawaii and southern California from 27 June to 2 August.

This year's exercise involves 26 nations, 52 ships and submarines, 18 national land forces, more than 200 aircraft and some 25,000 personnel.

Major General Tim Gall, the Commander Joint Forces New Zealand, said Te Mana's deployment was a great opportunity to strengthen engagement with maritime forces in the region and to enhance linkages with non-traditional security partners.

Casualties and WW2

The first British casualties of the Second World War were neither members of the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force - but were British merchant seamen on the liner Athenia (pictured below), torpedoed by U-30 on 3 September 1939.



For the duration of the War Britain's merchant fleet performed a vital role, carrying the essential supplies that kept the country running during the darkest days and then made victory possible.

Their achievements came at a terrible cost with 2,535 British ocean-going merchant ships being sunk and, of the 185,000 men and women serving in the British Merchant Navy at the time, 36,749 sacrificed their lives. A further 4,707 were wounded and 5,720 ended up in prisoner of war camps.

The Merchant Navy's casualty rate of 25 percent was second only to RAF Bomber Command's losses.

Pic of the Month



For your diary

RCCNZ Meeting
Thursday 23 August 2018 at RSA Lower Hutt

Merchant Navy Day Wreath Laying
Monday 3 September 2018 at Hall of Memories, Wellington

RCCNZ Christmas Gathering
Thursday 22 November 2018 at Otaki

Sign on the front door of a bookshop that was going out of business:



Shore Leave

I spotted a Navy captain on the street. I saluted and bellowed, "LST 395," my ship designation during World War II.

The captain returned my salute and responded, "LMD 67."

"What's an LMD?" I asked.

"Large mahogany desk!"

Up Spirits!



Derek Whitwam
President
Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand
(04) 971 4636 E-mail: atired.92@gmail.com
Web: www.russianconvoyclub.org.nz