



The Arctic Convoy Club of New Zealand

Newsletter

June 2023

Dear shipmates, families and friends

ANZAC Day 2023

The Arctic Convoy Club of New Zealand was this year represented on ANZAC Day at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park in Wellington by Associate Member Ian Carson (right).

A wreath laid on behalf of the Club by Ian, whose father served on HMS Trinidad during the convoys, was among the many tributes offered during the service in the presence of Her Excellency The Rt Hon. Dame Helen Winkelmann GNZM, Administrator of the Government, on behalf of His Majesty The King.



The service this year also commemorated the 70th anniversary of the end of fighting in Korea and the 60th anniversary of New Zealand's first involvement in Vietnam, with the arrival of a civilian surgical team on Anzac Day 1963.



Photo Credits: Mark Tantrum



SS Otaki commemorated

On Friday 10 March 2023, Ōtaki College held its annual SS Otaki Wreath Laying Ceremony. Distinguished guests included Her Worship the Mayor, Janet Holborow, Mr Rawiri Rikihana, representing Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, representatives of the merchant navy and related organisations, the New Zealand Shipping Company, the Durham Association, the Royal New Zealand Navy, Royal New Zealand Air Force, representatives from the British and German Embassies and the Ōtaki RSA.

The ceremony holds a special place in the College calendar as it serves to introduce younger students to the concepts of courage and bravery - not just in war but in everyday life.

This year's ceremony honoured the 150 Year anniversary of the founding of the New Zealand Shipping Company.

The New Zealand Shipping Company (NZSCo) was established in 1873 by a group of Christchurch businessmen primarily to operate passenger and cargo services between the United Kingdom and New Zealand. The company gradually established a fleet of ships named after geographical landmarks which were recognised by their Māori names. From 1875 the livery consisted of black hulls, white superstructure and yellow funnels.



Derek Whitwam
President of the Arctic Convoy Club of New Zealand laid a wreath on behalf of the Club

In 1912, an agreement was reached with another shipping company, the Federal Steam Navigation Company, which was absorbed into the NZSCo. However, the Federal Steam Navigation Company continued to trade as a separate concern, the ships retained their distinctive house flag and they continued to be named after English counties. The amalgamation of the two companies provided the newly structured NZSCo with a firm foothold in the Australian trade.

The next change came in September 1916, when the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) acquired a controlling interest in the company. During the next 56 years, the NZSCo made a huge contribution to the economy until, in 1971, it was incorporated into P&O's general cargo division.

And in Christchurch on ANZAC Day ...



Associate ACCNZ Member Cameron Taylor with son Julian at the 2023 ANZAC Day ceremony in Christchurch. Julian's great grandfather served on HMS Vigilant during the convoys to the northern ports of Murmansk and Archangelsk during the Second World War.

The Battle for the Atlantic commemorated

Royal Navy and allied warships have joined merchant vessels in Liverpool for three days of commemorations marking the Battle of the Atlantic.

Led by destroyer HMS Defender, the ships arrived on the morning of Friday May 26, raising the curtain on a weekend of events to mark the 80th anniversary of the longest, hardest naval battle in British history.

Joining HMS Defender (pictured below) on the prime berth of the Cruise Liner Terminal at the heart of Liverpool's waterfront will be the French frigate Bretagne, and Trinity House Vessel Patricia. The American destroyer USS Ramage also planned to call into the city during the weekend.



"This will probably be our final chance to say 'thank you' to that wonderful wartime generation who fought the battle – serving in the ships, in the docks, in the shipyards, in the homes," said Commodore Phil Waterhouse, the Royal Navy's Regional Commander for Northern England, based at HMS Eaglet in Liverpool.

"No city is more connected with the Battle of the Atlantic than Liverpool, it felt its effects, suffered the loss of men, suffered under the bombs, waved U-boat hunters off to sea and celebrated their return. So there can be no more fitting a setting for these 80th anniversary commemorations."

The weekend got underway with a private service of commemoration at St Nick's Church at the Pier Head. HRH The Princess Royal was guest of honour at the service, which acknowledged the sacrifice of the thousands of UK and allied sailors involved in the Battle of the Atlantic, both merchant and military.

After the church service, The Princess Royal unveiled a new Battle of the Atlantic Memorial and garden of reflection – the first of its kind in the UK – in the church grounds.

In the evening a poignant light show beaming the names of ships and sailors into the skies – Atlantic Lights – was switched on at Woodside for the first time.

Both the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and vintage Fleet Air Arm Swordfish and Seafire aircraft staged flypasts on all three days of the event.

Battle of the Atlantic displays and special family activities were open for visitors at Western Approaches Museum and the Maritime Museum in the Royal Albert Dock.

Over the water in Birkenhead, Cammell Laird shipyard ran a series of BoA80-themed tours around its yard to celebrate the efforts of shipbuilders in WW2, and to show how things have moved on (they are currently converting new seabed surveillance ship RFA Proteus for military use).

On Sunday May 28 there was a Drumhead service of thanksgiving at midday at Pier Head followed at 1.30pm by a March for the Medals from Exchange Flags to Princes Parade, where a group of Battle of the Atlantic veterans, now all in their 90s, took the salute from the marching troops.

The weekend's commemorations concluded with the visiting vessels sailing down the Mersey, escorted by a convoy from the Mersey's maritime community and a Beat Retreat played by His Majesty's Royal Marines Band at Pier Head.



Hitching a ride



On board the British cruiser HMS Berwick in the Arctic in November 1944 during an Arctic trip to Russia. This dunlin (type of sandpiper) joined the ship in the Arctic, hundreds of miles from land and became the pet of Lieut. F G Wilkinson, RNVR, of York. Source: IWM.

Up Spirits!



Derek Whitwam
President, The Arctic Convoy Club of New Zealand
Tel: (04) 971 4636 or Mobile: (027) 971 4636
Email: atired.92@gmail.com
Web: <http://www.arctic.org.nz>