



**Russian Convoy Club
of New Zealand**

Newsletter
October/November 2016

Dear shipmates, families and friends

Merchant Navy Day commemorated in Wellington



Photo: Elizabeth Fisher

On Merchant Navy Day 3 September several members attended the Hall of Memories at Pukeahu War Memorial Park in Wellington where a wreath was laid on behalf of the club. In the picture John Forsyth, President of the Wellington branch of the Merchant Navy Association, can be seen centre front.



Dervish anniversary commemorated at Archangelsk



No word to date from the New Zealand Ambassador to Russia re the 75th Anniversary of "Operation Dervish" celebrations in Archangelsk. However, those members on the internet can Google "Operation Dervish" for pictures of the event. The celebrations were attended by Princess Anne, a Royal Marine Band and by Ambassadors from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand and Australia and officials from the Polish and French diplomatic missions.



Navy Reception and HMNZS Otago in Wellington

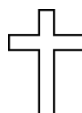


On Saturday 1 October 2016 our Immediate Past President Chris King and I were invited on board HMNZS Otago, berthed in Wellington, for a reception to celebrate the RNZN's 75th Birthday. This went off extremely well in spite of the inclement weather.

Sunday morning divisions were held at Old St Paul's with the theme of "Our Time of Celebration", outlined by Chief of Navy Rear Admiral John Martin. In a presentation titled "Those Were the Days", Richard Howland set out his recollections of his time in the RNZN and this was followed by a bubbly presentation titled "These Are the Days" by ORD Awhina Owen who has been in the RNZN for only eight weeks. The service was followed by morning tea at Defence HQ where Chief of Navy and ORD Owen cut the birthday cake.



Crossing the bar



We are sad to report that our Convoy member Bill Megennis passed away on 23 September 2016. Four of our members attended his funeral at St. Anne's Anglican Church, Northland, Wellington.

Soviet Awards to be displayed

Through the good offices of our treasurer Syd Wells, the club has come into possession of a medal which was awarded by the Soviet Union in 1975 to renowned poet and publisher Lt Cdr Denis James Matthews Glover DSC RN RNZNVR. The medal is inscribed "Anniversary Medal 30th Anniversary of the Soviet Committee of War Veterans" and was presented for service on four Russian Convoys to Murmansk. Denis passed away in 1980.



Also, two medallions and a three Rouble coin issued by the Russian Federation in 1991 to participants of the Arctic Convoys were donated to the Club by Company Sergeant Major Bill Ryan of the US Army. Bill made two trips to Murmansk in the US Mercantile Marine before joining the US Army. He was wounded at Omaha Beach on D-Day then went on to serve in Germany, Korea and Vietnam, serving 30 years before retiring.

These items have been mounted and framed with suitable descriptions. They will be loaned to the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA to be placed on view.

RCCNZ Next meeting

Members should make a note that our next meeting will be held at the home of Rear Admiral David Ledson and Barbara, 60 County Road, Otaki at 11:00 hrs on 24 November 2016. For catering purposes, those members intending to attend should advise me before 5 November 2016 by phone, email or letter (but please, not by ESP!).

White Ensign flew from Auckland Harbour Bridge



At dawn on Saturday 1 October 2016, the New Zealand White Ensign flown by the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) was hoisted on the Auckland Harbour Bridge for the first time.

Only four flags aside from the New Zealand flag have been permitted to fly on the Auckland Harbour Bridge. The Tino Rangatiratanga flag flies on Waitangi Day and the Australian flag on ANZAC Day. The Red Ensign was first flown on 3 September 2014, to commemorate the role of the Merchant Navy in wartime and earlier this year the proposed Silver Fern flag was flown.

The Minister of Transport, Simon Bridges, gave permission for the White Ensign to fly from the bridge to mark the establishment of the Royal New Zealand Navy on 1 October 1941. It will be hoisted on the bridge on 1 October every year in future.

Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral John Martin, said it was an honour to have the White Ensign fly on such a well-known landmark, within sight of Devonport Naval Base – the home of the RNZN.

“Our Navy patrols the fourth-largest Exclusive Economic Zone in the world and our work stretches from Antarctica to the Middle East,” Rear Admiral Martin said. “In this, our 75th year, it is wonderful to celebrate our country’s acknowledgement of their Navy in such a way.”

Initially established as a division of the Royal Navy in the early 1900s, it was not until 1 October 1941 that His Majesty King George VI approved the designation “Royal New Zealand Navy” for the regular element of the New Zealand Naval Forces, with Reserve and Volunteer Reserve elements appropriately titled.

The 75th Anniversary of the foundation of RNZN is being celebrated with a programme of commemorative events and activities, collectively named “Operation NEPTUNE”. The name Operation NEPTUNE has been chosen to highlight the greatest single loss sustained by our Navy. HMS NEPTUNE (a sister ship to HMNZS ACHILLES of River Plate fame) was being prepared for transfer to the RNZN when she sank after hitting an enemy minefield in the Mediterranean on 19 December 1941 with the loss of all but one man - including all 150 of the New Zealanders who had already joined the ship.

The Auckland Harbour Bridge flag-raising was part of a year of celebrations, culminating with the International Naval Review, which will feature warships from a number of nations entering Auckland Harbour in spectacular formation on 17 November 2016.

Pic of the Month



A prop for the Royal Navy’s newest carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth!

The ship, being constructed in parts across six shipyards (because no single shipyard was large enough to build the ship in its entirety) also includes over 250,000km of electrical and 8,000km of fibre-optic cables.

The project employs 3,000 people in Rosyth, with another 8,000 people working at sites around the country. And a special crane, 68m tall and 120m across commissioned for the project.

Memorial follow-up



In our last newsletter we reported that a plaque had been placed on the war memorial in the village of Merstham, Surrey, England.



Regards from Russia

Up Spirits!



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