



# The National Commemoration for Merchant Navy Day

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**HALL OF MEMORIES**

**PUKEAHU NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL PARK**

**3 SEPTEMBER 2023**

# International Maritime Signal Flags

Signal flags are used to communicate messages between ships while maintaining radio silence.



**I have struck a mine**



**I have sprung a leak**



**You should stop immediately. Do not scuttle. Do not lower boats. Do not use the wireless. If you disobey I will open fire on you.**



**I am on fire**



**I am sinking**



*Queen Mary 2 offers a message of peace and goodwill.*



**I cannot save my vessel**



**I wish you peace, much goodwill and good fortune**



*Cover image: Allan Wyllie on board MV Limerick. Although registered in London, Limerick was under Union Company management and crewed mostly by New Zealanders. It was torpedoed off Cape Byron, New South Wales in April 1943. Image courtesy of Wyllie collection*

# The Merchant Navy at war

**Merchant Navy Day commemorates the contribution of civilian merchant seafarers in wartime. The date, 3 September, marks the sinking of a British merchant ship just hours after the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.**

The work of merchant seafarers in wartime was so vital that many people called them the 'fourth service'. Its personnel were a diverse group: some seafarers were as young as 14 years old; others were in their 70s.

Britain had adopted the symbolic term 'Merchant Navy' in the 1920s in recognition of the loss of 2500 British Empire ships and 15,000 seafarers during the First World War.

That death toll included at least 70 New Zealanders, 17 of whom were lost when the Union Steam Ship Company's cadet ship *Aparima* was torpedoed in the Atlantic in 1917. But local waters were not immune to enemy action: in 1917–18 the German raider *Wolf* and the mines it laid around New Zealand sank the *Wairuna*, *Port Kembla* and *Wimmera*.

A generation and another war later, New Zealand seafarers again served with distinction, sailing on local ships as well as in those of many Allied nations. In this even more global conflict almost 5000 Allied merchant ships were sunk, and around 60,000 seafarers died.

War service took New Zealanders to nearly every ocean, with the North Atlantic and Mediterranean being particularly dangerous places. Some endured the Russian convoy run in the Arctic, where the weather was also an unforgiving enemy.

Between 1942 and 1945 New Zealand's ports, merchant ships and seafarers played an important role in the Allied war effort against Japan, ferrying troops, food and supplies throughout the southwestern Pacific.

In 1943 – 80 years ago this year – two New Zealand freighters, the *Kalingo* and *Limerick*, were sunk by Japanese submarines in the Tasman Sea, highlighting the risks merchant seafarers faced even when serving far from the front lines.

More than 140 New Zealand merchant seafarers died between 1939 and 1945, most while sailing on British ships in the Atlantic. A similar number were taken prisoner by German and Japanese forces.

Today seafarers, including New Zealanders sailing under many flags, continue to keep the global economy moving. Ships have changed, as have trade patterns, but the sea remains our great highway.

# Order of Ceremony

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## KARANGA

**Pekaira Rei**, Taranaki Whānui

response by

**Hollie Pohatu**, Ngāti Porou

## PARADING OF THE NEW ZEALAND RED ENSIGN

**Cadet Petty Officer Alexander Worth**

TS Amokura Navy Cadets

## NATIONAL ANTHEM OF NEW ZEALAND

sung by **Lieutenant Rebecca Nelson, RNZN**

accompanied by

**Leading Aircraftman Leonardo Coghini,**

**RNZAF**

## KARAKIA TĪMATANGA

**Peter Jackson**, Taranaki Whānui

## WELCOME

**Colonel (Rtd) Roger Howard**

Member of the National War Memorial  
Advisory Council

## COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

**The Honourable Andrew Little**

Minister of Defence

## HISTORICAL READING

Extract “Allied freighter [*Kalingo*]  
torpedoed near port” in *The Western  
Australian* newspaper, 21 January 1943

read by **Caleb Smith**

Head Boy, Ōtaki College

## THE SAILORS HYMN

*Eternal Father, Strong to Save*

sung by **Lieutenant Rebecca Nelson, RNZN**

accompanied by

**Leading Aircraftman Leonardo Coghini,**

**RNZAF**

## PRAYER OF REMEMBRANCE

**The Reverend Lance Lukin KHC OSTJ JP**

Regional Director Oceania & Pacific Region/  
Wellington Port Chaplain

## LAYING OF WREATHS

**The Honourable Andrew Little**

Minister of Defence

on behalf of the Government and people of  
New Zealand

**Philip Harland**

Merchant Navy veteran

on behalf of the New Zealand

Merchant Navy Association

**Commodore Andrew Brown, RNZN**

Deputy Chief of Navy

on behalf of the Chief of the New Zealand  
Defence Force

**His Excellency Alfredo Pérez Bravo**

Ambassador of Mexico and

Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

on behalf of the Dean of the

Diplomatic Corps

**Captain (Rtd) John Mansell**  
on behalf of the New Zealand Company of  
Master Mariners

*and*

**Derek Whitwam**  
President of the Arctic Convoy Club  
on behalf of the Arctic Convoy Club  
of New Zealand

**Glenn Wyllie**  
on behalf of the Maritime Union  
New Zealand

*and*

**Captain Iain MacLeod**  
Vice-President of the New Zealand  
Merchant Service Guild  
on behalf of the New Zealand Merchant  
Service Guild

**Hannah Thompson**  
Head Girl, Ōtaki College  
on behalf of the youth of New Zealand

**AJ (Tom) Cormack JP**  
District President of Wellington, West  
Coast, Taranaki, Royal New Zealand  
Returned and Services' Association  
on behalf of the Royal New Zealand  
Returned and Services' Association

## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

**Robin Wynne-Williams RN, JP, QSM**  
New Zealand Merchant Navy Association

## **THE COMMEMORATION**

### **THE SAILORS' ODE IN TE REO MĀORI**

**Lieutenant Commander  
Gerard McGrath, RNZN**

### **THE SAILORS' ODE IN ENGLISH**

**Paul Baggott**  
President of the New Zealand  
Merchant Navy Association

### **LAST POST**

Uniformed personnel salute  
  
The New Zealand Red Ensign and the  
New Zealand flag are lowered to half-mast

### **ONE MINUTE SILENCE**

### **ROUSE**

The New Zealand Red Ensign and the  
New Zealand flag are raised to full-mast

### **THE NEW ZEALAND RED ENSIGN IS PARADED OUT**

**Cadet Petty Officer Alexander Worth**  
TS Amokura Navy Cadets

### **CLOSING**

**The Reverend Lance Lukin KHC OSTJ JP**

### **KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA**

**Peter Jackson, Taranaki Whānui**

# Roll of Honour

The following names are from the Roll of Honour of seafarers who died during the Second World War as a result of service on New Zealand merchant ships, and New Zealanders known to have lost their lives while sailing under the flags of other countries.

## **HICKS, WILLIAM JOHN**

**Age 25, fireman, 02/12/1942**

*Wallsend, Central Atlantic*

## **HOLLAND, WILLIAM**

**Age 45, able seaman, 12/07/1945**

*ex-Hauraki (NZ), Japan (died in captivity)*

## **HOLMES, CHARLES EDWARD**

**Age 54, storekeeper, 07/12/1942**

*Ceramic, North Atlantic*

## **HOLTHOUSE, SCRAFTON LE GAY**

**Age 58, second officer, 30/11/1941**

*Empire Newcomen, North Sea*

## **HOSFORD, BENJAMIN**

**Age 22, 3rd mate, 28/12/1942**

*Empire Wagtail, North Atlantic*

## **HUGHES, JOHN LLOYD**

**Age 27, 2nd mate, 08/12/1940**

*Komata (NZ), Nauru, Pacific*

## **HUGHES, LEWIS**

**Age 57, motorman, 27/02/1943**

*ex-Hauraki (NZ), Japan (died in captivity)*

## **HUMPHREY, HAROLD EDMOND**

**Age 37, steward, 19/02/1942**

*Mununda (Australian hospital ship),*

*Darwin, Australia*

## **JAMES, FREDERICK JOHN MARTIN**

**Age 27, 3rd mate, 11/05/1944**

*Edward D. Baker (US), buried in*

*New Guinea*

## **JORDAN, RICHARD HENRY**

**Age 25, 9th engineer, 17/01/1941**

*Zealandic, North Atlantic*

# Flags

## RED ENSIGN



New Zealand Merchant Navy

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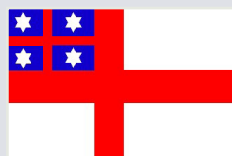
## HOUSE FLAGS



Union Steamship Company of New Zealand



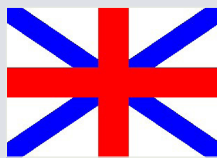
Blue Star Line



Shaw Savill and Albion



New Zealand Shipping Company



Port Line



Anchor Line

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## ORGANISATIONS THAT SERVED SEAFARERS DURING TIMES OF CONFLICT



Mission to Seafarers



Wellington Harbour Board



*American World War II supplies for the Guadalcanal campaign ready for transport on Aotea Quay, Wellington, 1943. Image courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: PAColl-6075-32*





*Troopship SS Wahine on the way to New Zealand from the Pacific Islands, carrying a Mitsubishi Zero (later NZ6000), circa October 1945. Image courtesy of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand, Ref: MUS100242*



This National Commemorative Service was arranged by The Visits and Ceremonial Office, Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs, in partnership with Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Manatū Aorere Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa the New Zealand Defence Force and The New Zealand Merchant Navy Association.

