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## LONGCAST

- 7 April 23 – Good Friday
- 10 April 23 – Easter Monday
- 14 April 23 – Navy Club
- 21 April 23 – Poppy Day
- 21 April 23 - Ngaipona Assn Lunch at Avondale RSA
- 25 April 23 – ANZAC Day
- 12 May 23 – Navy Club

### Hi Folks

#### **ANZAC DAY AT HMNZS PHILOMEL**

ANZAC day is looming and HMNZS Ngaipona is in the process of getting the ball rolling. The Veterans and Ngaipona Assn members as usual are more than welcome to attend and take part.

Padre may need a few readers. If you can assist, please contact Padre Michael Berry on [michaelberry@gmail.com](mailto:michaelberry@gmail.com)

If you wish to attend the parade, contact the Ngaipona Coxn, CPOCSS Shane Kennedy, :09 446 1438, with your name and car registration number.



Muster at HMNZS Ngapona

Fall In - 0730

Step Off - 1745

Hope you all enjoyed the extra hours sleep!

### **NEW CRANE FOR LYTTELTON**

The arrival of the parts for the new Liebherr crane on the heavy lifter *Uhl Fierce* from Fenit on March 22 brings the Cashin Quay container terminal's complement up to four cranes again after the oldest was dismantled last year. Work would begin straight away on assembling it, said a Lyttelton Port spokesperson. It was a three-month process to construct and commission, and the crane should go into service by the end of June. The new crane matches the design parameters of the two newest cranes in terms of reach and speed and has all the bells and whistles of the latest generation of cranes. Having a four-crane fleet is key to providing flexibility for our operation and maintenance

schedule, ensuring we can provide efficient services to our many customers. "Lyttelton is not the biggest port in the world, but few, if any, of its size can match its range of services, catering to container, bulk, cruise ship, reefer, and product tanker services, as well as being the traditional nautical gateway to Antarctica." said the spokesperson.

### **CHANGE IS HAPPENING**

Cruising quietly through the Frier Fjord in southern Norway, the *Yarra Birkeland* looks like an ordinary small ship. However, by the end of the year, the number of crew on board will be reduced from five to two and then, if all goes well, in two more years the vessel's bridge will be removed and there won't be any crew on board at all. Until then, Captain Svend Ødegård is at the helm of the 80m-long ship. "We are taking big steps towards autonomy," he tells the BBC. "There's a lot of installed technology there, that is not on existing ships." Eventually the *Yarra Birkeland* will navigate aided by sensors, including radar and cameras, which will feed data to an artificial intelligence, which will detect and classify waterborne obstacles. "We have situational awareness – cameras on the side, front and stern of the ship," the captain explains. "It can decide whether to change its path because something is in the way." The captain's job will move onto dry land, to a remote operation centre more than 80km (50 miles) away, where several ships could potentially be monitored at the same time. If necessary, humans will be able to intervene by sending commands to alter the speed and course. Owned by fertiliser giant Yara, the *Yarra Birkeland* has been sailing twice weekly for last several months from the firm's enormous plant near Porsgrunn to the port of Brevik, carrying up to 100 containers and collecting data along the 13km (8 miles) route.



The *Yarra Birkeland* moored at the Yara Terminal in Porsgrunn

### **THIS IS A VERY SAD ANNOUNCEMENT**

NEW Zealand seafarers and community supporters are planning a demonstration in response to the withdrawal of Maersk's Coastal Connect service. The Maritime Union of New Zealand announced on

Thursday the seafaring community and other participants would gather for “a peaceful informational picket” near Port Nelson on Sunday 2 April. Maersk announced on 17 March that it would phase out the dedicated coastal service in April this year, a decision it attributed to supply chain disruptions around New Zealand. The container service began less than a year ago, calling ports of Auckland, Tauranga, Nelson, Lyttelton and Timaru. The two containerships on the service, *Maersk Nadi* and *Maersk Nansha*, had New Zealand crews. Maritime Union of New Zealand national secretary Craig Harrison said the move to pull the service resulted in the loss of as many as 60 local seafaring jobs. He believes the decision will further disrupt the country’s supply chains. He said New Zealand is currently facing “an ongoing supply chain crisis”. “That is why goods are taking so long to be imported and exported and moved around New Zealand,” Mr Harrison said in a statement. He said coastal shipping is an efficient mode of transport that provides resilience during natural disasters. In the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle, Mr Harrison called for coastal ships to be used in relief efforts. “This decision by Maersk shows that we need to take our coastal shipping capability more seriously,” Mr Harrison said. He said the Maritime Union of New Zealand is proposing changes to the Maritime Transport Act to prioritise New Zealand flagged and crewed ships on the New Zealand coast. The union is also proposing government support for a New Zealand-owned coastal shipping operator to provide priority service for New Zealand ports, and training and employment opportunities for NZ nationals in the industry.

Source: Daily Cargo News

*“With the closure of roads in the Hawkes Bay and the Brynderwyns I would have thought a coastal shipping service would have been a great back-up” - Ed*



**PILOT BOAT IS A BIT DIFFERENT FROM LAST WEEK!**



The Puerto Princesa pilot boat returning to port after delivering the pilot.  
Puerto Princesa is in the Mimaropa region of the Philippines.

## **ROYAL NAVY SHIPS IN NEW ZEALAND**

### HMS ORPHEUS

Built in Chatham Dockyard as a Jason class corvette. Launched 23 June 1860.

Armament: 20 8 inch muzzle loading smoothbore guns; 1 pivot mounted 7 inch Armstrong breech loader.

Propulsion: Sail/steam

Speed: 11.1 knots  
Length: 225 feet  
Beam: 40 feet.  
Draught: 18ft.  
Displacement: 2,365 tons  
Complement: 258

HMS *Orpheus* was commanded by Captain Robert heron Burton and was the flagship of the Australian Station flying the broad pennant of Commodore William Farquharson Burnett as the senior officer on the Australian Station. *Orpheus* sailed from Plymouth for Australia in December 1861 via Canada eventually arriving at Sydney 20 March 1862 to take up her duties.

One report indicates that *Orpheus* was to proceed to New Zealand to assist HMS *Niger* and HMS *Harrier* in the Maori War. A second however has her proceeding to New Zealand to arrange for the withdrawal of HMS *Miranda* stationed in the Manukau, and HMS *Harrier* all ships to meet in the Waitemata Harbour. In any event, she sailed Sydney on the 31 Jan 1863 with it is said, with many young English and Australian midshipmen on board.

The voyage to New Zealand was made in clear calm conditions arriving in sight of the west coast of the North Island at around 0700 on the 7<sup>th</sup> February. One report indicates that *Orpheus* was behind schedule causing Commodore Burnett to make the decision to save time by entering the Manukau Harbour rather than transiting around North Cape to the Waitemata.

The entrance to the Manukau had been charted in 1836 and again in 1856. A revised pilotage guide of 1861 indicated that a sand bar in the middle of the Approaches had grown considerably since 1856. *Orpheus* was known to have carried both the out-of-date charts and the updated pilotage guide. Reportedly, the Sailing Master William Strong originally used the updated instructions for entering the harbour but was to be over-ruled by the Commodore and the ship began her entry using the 1856 chart.

As the ship approached the submerged bar, a signal from the signal station on Paratutae Island instructed her to turn north to avoid grounding. Soon after, one Frederick Butler, Quartermaster of the *Harrier* who had deserted his ship in Sydney, had been arrested and placed in detention in *Orpheus*, became aware of the danger the ship was in from where he was being held. He had crossed the bar in *Harrier* twice before and was thus experienced in the Manukau bar crossing. He was able to alert the Commodore to the danger that *Orpheus* was in. However, despite that his protestations were listened to and immediate avoiding action taken, the ship grounded at about 1330. *Orpheus* broached in the swells. The ships head was to the north and the seas pounded her port side. Pandemonium reigned in the ship as guns and other heavy objects broke loose careering across the decks creating havoc and carnage. Hatches burst open, cabin windows shattered, the ship began to take on water. Commodore Burnett ordered the crew to abandon *Orpheus* and a launch managed to get away with about 40 men aboard but was swept under the seas and stove in. Many sailors were lost due to the force of the seas. Eventually, all hands left on board were forced into the rigging as the seas increased in intensity.

The steamship *Wonga Wonga* under the pilotage of the harbourmaster of the Port of Manukau was leaving the harbour at the time and when she became aware of the plight of the *Orpheus* and

attempted to pick up survivors. She picked up survivors from the *Orpheus* pinnace (the only boat to succeed in getting away from *Orpheus*) and on launching her own boats picked up a further twenty souls. At about 2000, the masts of the *Orpheus* began to break with the result that most of those who had sought refuge there were killed. *Wonga Wonga* remained in the vicinity overnight continuing to look for survivors.

Of the men on board *Orpheus*, there were but sixty-nine who survived. Some of the dead were buried in sand dunes on shore. There is an information board located near the Kakamatua Inlet near Titirangi indicating the approximate area where some were buried. The survivors on *Wonga Wonga* were transferred to HMS *Avon* and taken to Onehunga and thence across to Auckland to be accommodated in HMS *Miranda*.

Of the survivors there were eight officers. These and ten hands were sent to England to appear before a court martial (more a Court of Inquiry in this case). Of the others, 25 sailors were drafted to HMS *Harrier*, the remainder remained in *Miranda*.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1863, the Admiralty held the inquiry on HMS *Victory* at Portsmouth and found that the loss of *Orpheus* was due to the shifting nature of the Manukau bar which rendered navigation particularly difficult. It also found that 'the discipline of the ship and the conduct of all showed how British seamen could face death with that gallant chivalrous fortitude for which they were proverbial and would be held as an example for others in after days'. This was due to the courage shown by the ship's company throughout of which there have been several examples documented. The *Orpheus* disaster remains one of the worst maritime disasters in New Zealand and for the navy on the Australia Station.

Orpheus Island off the coast of Queensland was named after HMS *Orpheus*.

PostScript: Notwithstanding the findings of the Admiralty Court of Inquiry, the cause of the disaster is disputed, the Navy blaming others beyond its own (namely Edward Wing the signalman on duty at the signal station). However local Maori have another explanation. On the western point of Puketutu Island located near the scene there grew a puriri tree considered tapu. The day before the *Orpheus* was wrecked a pakeha felled the tree to use the wood for fence posts. Maori link the disaster with violation of the tapu.



When HMS *Orpheus* was wrecked on the Manukau bar on 7 February 1863 as many as 189 men lost their lives. Many of the drowned men were buried in unmarked graves where they were washed ashore. An exception was made for three unknown sailors, who were buried near Cornwallis Beach in

1863. Their graves were carefully marked, possibly by members of the Kilgour family (local settler John Kilgour was later also buried at the site).

After some decades of obscurity, the graves were 'rediscovered' in the 1970s. On 3 March 1974 naval chaplain Father Cronin rededicated them and unveiled a bronze commemorative plaque at the site.

This reads: 'This plaque marks the graves / of three unknown sailors of / the Queen who lost their lives / when H.M.S. Orpheus foundered / at the Manukau entrance on / February 7<sup>th</sup> 1863 / Unknown friends who recovered / the bodies from the sea below / laid them to rest in this quiet place.'



Regards

[Jerry Payne](#)

Editor

HMNZS Ngapona Assn

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