

PRINCESS ANNE AND FAMILY

Princess Anne releases rare public statement to mark Victory Day in Russia

By Charlie Proctor - 9th May 2020



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The Princess Royal has released a statement paying tribute to the veterans who took part in the Arctic Convoys, working with Russian allies to deliver food, raw materials and critical military supplies for the Soviet war effort.

In her message, Princess Anne expressed her disappointment at not being able lay a wreath at the Soviet War Memorial in London due to the ongoing global health emergency.

In 2016, Her Royal Highness travelled to Russia, where she represented The Queen at commemorations to mark the 75th Anniversary of the first Arctic Convoys.

Princess Anne's message in full

"Today marks 75 years since the surrender of Germany brought an end to the Second World War in Europe. On this historic day, I would like to pay tribute to the men and women of that heroic generation, from many nations, who kept on fighting to achieve victory.

"In August 2016 I had the privilege to represent the United Kingdom during a visit to Arkhangelsk to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Operation Dervish, one of the first Arctic Convoys of the Second World War. Overcoming treacherous waters in deadly conditions, the Arctic Convoys played a critical role in that victory, binding the western allies and the Soviet Union together and enabling the provision of food, raw materials and critical military supplies to the Soviet war effort. I will always remember the understanding and the respect in the welcome I and the British serving personnel received.

"Sailors and airmen of the Arctic Convoys came from many nations – from the United Kingdom, Norway, the United States, Canada and across the Commonwealth, braving what Winston Churchill called "the worst journey in the world" to keep open the umbilical cord that nurtured ultimate victory. This Victory Day, I would also like to pay tribute to the veterans and the peoples of the former Soviet Union. This year I was honoured to be invited to attend a wreath-laying ceremony at the Soviet War Memorial in London. I intended to accept the invitation and I am disappointed that the current health situation has prevented this service from going ahead.

"It is vital that we recognise the incredible sacrifice made by the peoples of the former Soviet Union. Few people fought more bravely, or suffered more grievously for the price of victory. To all those of that heroic generation still alive today, your children and grandchildren are proud of the part you played in achieving victory.

"As we brace ourselves to confront the challenges of today, we can take our inspiration from the courage of those who kept faith with each other, and who formed a crucial chapter in the long history of friendship between the people of the United Kingdom and the peoples of Russia, of Ukraine, of Belarus, and of all the nations of the former Soviet Union."

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