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Park rededicated

The restoration of a memorial park is to honour the veterans but also preserve Thunder Bay's history, says the CEO of an engineering company. About a hundred residents attended the reintroduction of the Paterson Sailors Memorial Park on Monday.

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A parade helps to reintroduce Paterson Park on Monday. (Jeff Labine, tbnewswatch.com)
The restoration of a memorial park is to honour the veterans but also preserve Thunder Bay's history, says the CEO of an engineering company.

About a hundred residents attended the reintroduction of the Paterson Sailors Memorial Park on Monday. TBT Engineering purchased the land along with the two acre park from the Paterson family about a year ago and rehabilitated it into an open space for the public in memory of merchant sailors who were in the Second World War.

Lianna Frenette, CEO of TBT Engineering, said they hadn't thought of fixing up the park until they heard the history about the space. Frenette has a personal connection to the memorial. Her grandfather fought in the Second World War as an infantryman and while attending a memorial service, she said she thought of the promise to remember those who gave their lives during the war.

"I just felt like we should bring the park back to its former glory," Frenette said. "Because this

park was originally a memorial for the Paterson fleet, it was important that we keep that promise to remember."

Frenette said she was excited to see the park completed. The park, outside of the TBT Engineering building, is also located just before the bridge to Fort William First Nation. The old bridge added another historical flavour, she said.

"I think it is important to keep our history," she said. "We tried to restore the park as close as possible to the historical photos. "

The park included a few small flower gardens, a pond and fountain and also a flag pole surrounded with flowers. The arrangement of the flowers around the flag pole resembled the target shown on Second World War planes and is visible from the sky, Frenette said.

Veteran merchant sailors were present to unveil the new signage for the park. The reintroduction coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Canadian navy. *HMCS Griffon* commanding officer Lt.-Cmdr. John Bell said it's a happy coincidence.

"I think it's important to remember that there were vessels that were stationed here, that sailed here and did to go siege in the Second World War in the north Atlantic Ocean and were lost," Bell said. "Without the contribution of the merchant sailors we would have lost the war."

Bell said the park not only preserves Thunder Bay's history but also the city's spirit.