



Major General (ret'd) Mungo Melvin CB OBE

### **The 1905 Mutinies of the Black Sea Fleet**

#### **Synopsis**

In his talk, Major General Mungo Melvin will present a major episode from his latest work, *Sevastopol's Wars: Crimea from Potemkin to Putin*, published in April 2017. Melvin's broad contention is that Sevastopol, the main base of the Black Sea Fleet, has been of geostrategic importance to Russia since the time of Catherine the Great and remains so today. Although the Crimean city and naval citadel is renown for its heroic 'defences' during the Crimean and Second World Wars, it also figured prominently in the 1905 Bolshevik revolution. Crews of the Black Sea Fleet mutinied on two occasions: the famous incident on the battleship *Potemkin* was overshadowed by a much larger, but lesser known, revolt centred on the armoured cruiser *Ochakov*, led by Lieutenant P.P. Schmidt, in Sevastopol's main harbour. Drawing on personal memoirs and contemporary press reports, Mungo Melvin will describe these notable challenges to Tsarist power. Although brutally suppressed, the mutinies provided a harbinger of yet bloodier events to come in 1917, the year of two Russian revolutions, and the subsequent Civil War.

#### **Biography**

Mungo Melvin retired from the British Army in December 2011 following a career of 37 years in the Royal Engineers and the General Staff. He then served as an adviser to the House of Commons Defence Committee until April 2017. From 2012 to 2017 he was President of the British Commission for Military History. Recently appointed as the Chairman of the Royal Engineers Historical Society and as Vice President of the Western Front Association, he is a Senior Associate Fellow of the Royal United Services Institute and a Senior Visiting Research Fellow of the War Studies Department of King's College London. His *Manstein: Hitler's Greatest General*, published to critical acclaim in 2010, was awarded as the best military biography of the year by the United States Society for Military History in 2012.