



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH RUSSIA CLUB



N O R T H E R N L I G H T

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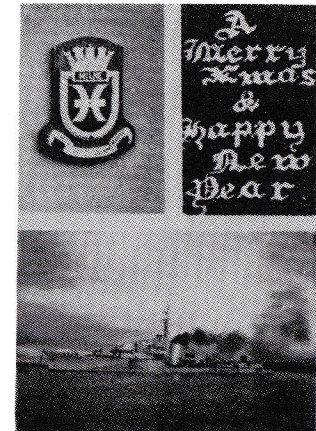
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am very pleased to have been invited again this year to send my good wishes at Christmas and for the New Year in this issue of Northern Light to each and every member of the North Russia Club.

In my goodwill message last year I expressed the hope that 1987 would be as active and interesting as 1986 had been. It has surely been that, with many lively reunions, the generous issue of more Soviet Commemorative Medals, and visits to Russia. 1988 is already looking equally promising.

My personal regards to you all.

K.A.R. Clarke, Captain RNR (Rtd).



GREETINGS FROM H.M.S. MILNE - CHRISTMAS 1943

Judging by your letters, our new cover has met with your universal approval and you have also found the contents to your liking. Well it's you who contribute them, I only edit and prepare them for the printer. So, keep up the good work. I don't intend to publish all of your letters as they would give our Art Artificer a swelled head, but I cannot resist this one, from Jimmy Green, ex-Obdurate.

"Thanks a lot for N.L. etc., a really first class job. Got it yesterday and just had to write back quickly. Thanks".

Thank you for the Northern Light
Got it yesterday

Opened it, and sat me down
Read it straight away.

Cover is a masterpiece
Les has done us proud,
Think that every one of us
Should shout his praises loud.

Neatly listed officers
Committee members too,
I'm sure we all appreciate,
The grand work they all do.

Ron Cooley's item on Page Four
Teaches us a lot
What poor old Bill got as reward
For bottling his tot.

George from 'Taurus' on Page Six
Wrote a lovely rhyme,
Agree with you chum, all the way
To win is not a crime.

The tour of Russia by Frank Green
Detailed on three pages
Something that they'll all recall
As they grow on through the ages.

The 'Bluebell' letter, Malta too,
And then a last Page Twenty
We read about the 'Bubby' boys
And how they all got plenty.

Finally I'd like to say
Thank you once again,
Until we meet I'll say goodbye
And so will just remain

"Jimmy Green"

Thanks Jim, shall I reserve the Poet's Corner for you in the next issue?

CONTINUED

May I thank all of the contributors who continue to supply me with so much copy - it ensures the continuation of our magazine. My announcement that we would feature a 'Focus on H.M.S. BLUEBELL' in this issue brought a terrific response. So much so that I have had an embarrassing time deciding what to omit! However, we are assured that in future issues we will be able to run further numbers in the 'Focus' series - particularly with DENBIGH CASTLE and WHITEHALL. In our next issue it will be the long overdue 'Focus on ONSLOW'.

A further change in this edition is the inclusion of the Newsletter from Chris. This was brought about by a member who phoned to say, "Chris's newsletter looked second class on photocopy in comparison with Northern Light and what can be done about it?" Well, no way will we allow Chris's efforts to be considered inferior, so we shall allocate him space in each issue. This will cut down the number of separate items that I have to enclose in each envelope, too. Nearly 700 now!! For those of you who want to keep the Newsletter separate from Northern Light, you will find that it is easily detachable, being the centre four pages (one sheet) of the magazine.

The list of officers published in N.L.8 omitted to state that our Welfare Officer is still Ron Phelps. Sorry Ron, and sorry to any member who may have wanted to contact our Welfare Department. His full address is Mr. R. Phelps, Warden's Flat, Frank Cook Court, School Road, Kidlington, Oxford.

Most of you read Navy News and other similar publications, so there is no real need to reprint small items from these publications. But, many of you may, on occasion, see a little 'snippet' in your local 'rag' or a 'national daily' that may be of interest to members. Please send the cuttings to me together with details of publication and date. Leave the worry of permission to reprint or copyright to me! Here are two typical cuttings from my own 'rag' the Liverpool Echo:-

☆ A SUCCESSFUL reunion was held recently by a few members of 846 Naval Air Squadron who served in HMS Tracker and HMS Trumpeter in the North Atlantic and on Russian convoys during 1942-1945.

☆ We now wish to contact as many ex-Squadron shipmates as possible for our next meeting. All those interested in attending can contact me.

Ted Billingham, 9
Micklelegate, Brewwood,
Staffs ST19 9JF (tel:
0902 850 517).

WHILE holidaying in Whitehaven, Cumbria, I met a man who was interested in finding his former shipmates from the Second World War.

I said that I would write to the Echo to see whether any readers could help him.

The ship concerned was the HMS Salamander No. J 86 of the Halcyon class sweepers and was part of the Russian convoy.

The searcher is Clem Stevens and he has fond memories of the Scousers he befriended. He would be delighted if they would contact him.

If anybody can help, if they'll write to me I will forward the information.

Mrs Clare Preston, 64
Glamis Road, Tuebrook,
Liverpool.

Incidentally, NRC member Jimmy Elliott of Childwall Liverpool, is also very keen to contact old shipmates from 'Salamander'.

Keep those letters and articles rolling shipmates.....Editor.

YOUR LETTERS

Before publishing the letters of interest, here is an instance why Chris's postman dreads reading the envelopes - the latest effort from one of you nautical imbeciles:

Rabbi Kristofus Tighe,
Spiritual Adviser to the Taiwan Boat People,
Late Detainee, Scouseland Constabulary,
Last of the Big Spenders,
Purveyor of Doubtful Literature,
(Has Railcard, Will Travel),
The Temple, Begonia Avenue,
GIGGLINGHAM, Kent.



Enough of this rot, let's get down to real business:-

Dear Dick, ('ead 'it 'er),
".....for one thing I never knew that any matelets were serving on Russian destroyers etc. That surely, cannot be known by many of our members. So perhaps a little mere enlightenment on the Whys and Wherefores would be very interesting in a future issue.

Being an ex-Royal Marine and disabled I've found some good mates since joining the club, but only one other Royal Marine! But hoping that there are a few more loafing around. When one is disabled (walking), it is a great thing to be able to hang on to something stable, like our club, to give some meaning to life.

I must apologise for the bad writing, the b..... ship went keep still in this weather. See you sometime. 'All the breast',

Peter D. Rayner, ex-SCYLIA.

(Peter, I am sure that some of our ex-Reynals will be in touch with you, there are quite a few about. And there is no need to wait until the next issue to read about the Russian destroyer crews, just turn to page 15. Ed.)

Dear Editor, re Phil Vine's letter regarding King George VI's visit to the Fleet onboard ONSLOW in 1942. Both King George and Sir Winston Churchill took passage on MILNE on different occasions and I enclose some photographs.



I think we went to the mainland to meet the King as his brother, the Duke of Kent, had died in a flying accident in the Orkneys just before the visit, and I seem to remember we picked up Sir Winston at Kirkwall, as he was visiting all three services. Our captain at the time was Sir Ian Campbell who, when he retired from the Navy was a Rear Admiral with numerous decorations. All the best
Percy A. Fisher, ex-MILNE.

continued.

LETTERS (continued)

Thanks for the photos Percy, and for the 1943 Christmas Card published on page one. I bet the Stokers Department were very popular with the skipper, making black smoke whilst at anchor!! I suppose they had the same old excuse - "Flashing up a cold boiler, Sir".

I've been a Barrack Stancheon,
In Jago's Glorious Mansions
And I always say 'Good Morning' to the Chief,
'GOOD MORNING CHIEF'.

Dick, Jago's Mansions of course, was the R.N. Barracks at Devonport. So named after a certain Lieut Jago who was responsible for the Messing System. Lord knows when he was alive - could have been in Nelson's time! I'm trying to remember the 'Song of the Barrack Stancheon' - something like this:

I wonder, yes I wonder, if the Jaunty made a blunder,
When he gave this foreign draft to me.
I've been a barrack stancheon, in Jago's glorious mansions,
And I always say good morning to the Chief,
Good Morning Chief.

I've rubbed miles and miles of brasswork,
And I've scubbed the ruddy deck,
And I always say good morning to the Chief,
Good Morning Chief.

So I wonder, yes I wonder, etc. etc.

I cant remember more - perhaps our readers can.

Cheers, Maurice Cross, ex-SEAGULL.

(More Jago's Naval Nonsense on following pages. Editor)

Now, excerpts from letters received by Peter Guntherpe, our Honorary Naval Historian, from Miss Patricia Hudson (A Beauty Therapist!)

"Re: H.M.S. MAHRATTA (Lieut-Comdr E.A.F. Drought DSC RN) sunk 25-2-1944, in the Barents Sea on escort duty with Convoy JW57."
During the past year I have been doing some research connected with my family and friends, who served in the Second World War. In my research I have visited P.R.O. at Kew and the Imperial War Museum, but I have only been able to come up with a few mentions of Mahratta. I wonder if any N.R.C. member can help? The date of her commissioning in 1943. Where she was mainly based and where her escort duties took her and any episodes in her short career. Her doctor was Surgeon Lieut. F.M. (Peter) McRae RNVR. I believe her first First Lieut. was Lieut. J.V.G. Holt and latterly Lt. John Catchpole RN. Any information on her captain and these three officers would be appreciated, whether good, bad or indifferent. This is purely personal and not for republication.
Patricia Hudson.

Can anyone help? There are a number of crew members of the 'Fighting Ms' amongst us - including myself. Perhaps someone can remember something. Editor.

WHAT IS A MATELOT? A matelot is usually in favour of Kids, Oggies, Friday Whiles, Bubbly, Grippe Runs (as long as they are to a brewery), He also likes All Night In, Beer, Wrens, Punch Ups, Figgy Duff and Make and Mends but not necessarily in that order.

The Birth, Life and Death of a Gallant Ship.



Contributors:- Naval Historical Branch, M.O.D., Admiralty Communiques, Oliver Nelson ex-HMS WHITEHALL, Don Kirten, ex-HMS BLUEBELL, Bill Griffiths and Bill Leoker, both ex-HMS DENBIGH CASTLE.

H.M.S. BLUEBELL, a Flower Class Corvette of 900 tons, was built by Fleming & Ferguson Ltd., at Paisley. Completed on 19th July 1940, she was allocated to the Western Approaches, Northern Escort Force, based at Reyth.

During 1940, she was engaged on all of the duties for which corvettes are responsible, escorting convoys, searching for, and attacking U-boats menacing the convoys, and the rescue of survivors. In the

first four months of the year she was involved in the rescue of survivors from five different incidents, including those from seven ships in convey SC7, from Canada to U.K, which had been attacked by U-boats between 16th and 19th October. On the latter date she had 203 survivors, from five ships aboard and had rejoined the convey to resume normal escort duties. Two days earlier she had assisted in the hunt for one of the attacking U-boats. On the 20th November she was allocated to the 5th Escort Group, based at Liverpool, continuing to escort convoys to and from Canada and Gibraltar, throughout 1941 and early 1942. On 12th October 1941, the C in C, Western Approaches commended BLUEBELL, for her steaming performances during the past three months, saying it reflected great credit on all members of the crew.

At the end of March 1942 she was sent to the Tyne for a three month refit. Her next assignment was again on escort duties between U.K. and Gibraltar, including HG75, which was shadowed and attacked for six days; but due to the excellent work on the part of the escorts, only four ships were lost. On the night of 11/12th December the BLUEBELL sighted and attacked U67 on the surface off Cape St Vincent, but was only able to inflict light damage. She continued to escort these convoys until September.

In September, as one of four corvettes of the close escort group she escorted PQ18, which was attacked by aircraft and submarine torpedoes and 13 of its 40 ships were lost. About 43 aircraft and 3 U-boats were however destroyed. Between the end of September and December no convoys sailed to Russia but one made the return journey, QP15, leaving Archangel, on 17th November. The BLUEBELL was one of the ocean escorts of this convoy, which because it was severely buffeted by a succession of gales, and sailed in almost continuous darkness, became very scattered, but only lost two of the thirty merchant vessels. During February 1943, the BLUEBELL again escorted a convey to North Russia, remaining in the Kola Inlet until June when she and the CAMELLIA were instructed to return to U.K. This was a

continued.

stage of an operation with two-fold purpose, the first being to transport stores and reliefs for the force in Spitzbergen, and the second to pass out the two corvettes and to transport stores and reliefs for the British ships and establishments in North Russia. The whole operation was accomplished without enemy interference.

H.M.S. BLUEBELL arrived at Bone on 9th July, after being one of the escorts for one of the assault convoys which sailed from the Clyde to take part in the invasion of Sicily. This successful operation secured Sicily as a base for future operations against Italy. The BLUEBELL was allocated to the 22nd Escort Group, Mediterranean Fleet, on 2nd August. In November she escorted a flight of 25 Landing Craft to the U.K. leaving Gibraltar on the 5th. In the early stages, she reported that she was being shadowed by enemy aircraft and on the 13th, heavy weather was experienced and the flight scattered in a N.W. gale. Four of the craft were lost but all of the members of the crews were rescued with the exception of one rating, who was drowned.

Re-allocated to the 23rd Escort Group, Western Approaches in December 1943, and undergoing a refit at Dunstaffnage she again escorted Russian Convoys until April 1944. When operations began for Operation 'Neptune', the invasion of Normandy, BLUEBELL sailed with convey ECL 1, as part of the escort for 31 LSTs on D-Day + 1. But by August she was again allocated to Russian Convey duties.

On 3rd February 1945, BLUEBELL sailed with JW 64 from Greenock. The convey was attacked on 10th by two waves of torpedo-bombers. No ships were damaged and the enemy aircraft suffered substantial losses. The return convey, RA 64 was not so fortunate. The Germans had assembled about six U-boats off the entrance to the Kola Inlet, and on the 17th, February H.M.S. LARK, which was sweeping ahead of the convey, was torpedoed but safely towed back to harbour; then a merchant ship was hit by the same U-boat and sank while being towed in.

Before the day was over, at 1530, H.M.S. BLUEBELL apparently gained asdic contact for she increased speed and almost immediately was hit aft by a torpedo, blowing up and sinking within 30 seconds.

Here, both official records and our member's recollections vary and it is interesting to compare them:

The Admiralty Summary of Service (S.7590) states, "There was one survivor".

The Naval Historical Branch of M.O.D. (Ref NHBL 17162) says "Three of her complement were recovered, but only one survived"

Member, Oliver Nelson says "There's not much doubt that the magazine went up because it wasn't only an underwater explosion, there was a really huge upper deck explosion with the blast and flame going up into the sky and the ship actually disintegrated. We carried on swinging and went over the spot a couple of minutes later, not more, and there was very, very little. Not even a lot of oil, the whole lot had gone.....a very sad day for us. When we reported the loss of BLUEBELL we reported 'No Survivors', but when the loss was announced by the Admiralty a few days later, it said 'One Survivor'. It turned out that one

H.M.S. BLUEBELL (conclusion)

of the ships company was transferred to CASSANDRA just before BLUEBELL sailed, but was still on her books.

Lieut. Bill Griffiths of DENBIGH CASTLE reports, "I was one of 26 survivors of DENBIGH CASTLE who were rescued by BLUEBELL, she had turned away to resume station on the convoy after having put us survivors aboard the 'Woolworth' carrier NAIRANA, when she stepped a torpedo. We were still on the weatherdeck when BLUEBELL went up and we, horrified, watched her end. She was literally blown to pieces and, as everyone knows, there was only one survivor. Does anyone know his whereabouts? If he is still around, and please God he is, I would like to contact him."

Finally, DENBIGH CASTLE's Gunnery Officer, Bill Looker recalls, "We were rescued by BLUEBELL and eventually transferred to a Soviet Sub Chaser. We returned to BLUEBELL alongside the jetty at Polyarnoe. One of her officers gave up his bunk for me - they were very kind to us. After transferring to NAIRANA I was on deck when BLUEBELL sunk, she blew up and there was one survivor, the P.O. Telegraphist."

Admiralty Communique No 304 confirmed that five officers and seventy-nine ratings were "Missing Presumed Killed", of these, all but three were Portsmouth ratings, the others being from Chatham.

Three of the crew saw 'The Birth, Life and Death' of a gallant ship.

" WE WILL REMEMBER THEM "

JUST A THOUGHT

Long summer evenings I look and stare :
Every day often wondering where :
Some 40 years or more have drifted by ;
All the time I wonder why !

Sitting by the sea, too old to swim ;
This is where, I sit and think of him :
Until distant dark clouds roll by ;
All the time I wonder why !

What makes sailor's wives and mothers
So much different from all others :
No cross ! No green grave ! To mark the place !
Surely, this is not a disgrace !

So when you pass a lovely garden
See many beautiful flowers set ;
Please ; Spare a thought, "For all who
gave their lives"
In the Flower Class Corvettes.

David E. Plume, QR II,
ex-HMS ASPHODEL (K56).

WHAT IS A MATELOT ? A matelot will not go to Church if it can possibly be avoided and yet he will not often be found breaking the Ten Commandments. He will call his 'oppo' all the four letter words that his mind can think of and then will share his last tickler with him.

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1987



Hullo again and welcome to our increased membership of 641. First of all, our Chairman, committee members, the editor and Yours Truly, wish you a very Happy Christmas and all you wish yourselves for the New Year. "Good on Yer, Shipmates". A specially warm welcome to the new members who are listed at the end of the newsletter. We are now heading for closure of the list at 700 as we have enough names on the waiting list to achieve our target. We look forward to your continued support and interest in 1988.

I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have recently invited me to their mini-reunions and functions, which I had the pleasure to attend and receive such warm welcomes. The Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset members at Frome, the Swindon R.N.A. members, the Hastings and surrounding area members, also Merseyside members in 'Scouseland' with the Submarine Old Comrades Association and Captain Walker's Old Boys, not forgetting the staff and crew members at H.M.S. Eaglet. I had received a personal invitation from Peg and Dick Squires just to have dinner and talk club business - this turned out to be an organised reunion attended by 25 or more club members with their wives and friends. What a well kept secret! And can you imagine me completely speechless. I certainly was that night, with the welcome and presentation of gifts. An HMS Eaglet wall shield was presented to the club and I was asked to keep it in my safe custody. A night in 'Scouseland' is nothing short of fantastic. Thanks Magnificent Merseyside.

And now an apology for another clanger. The omission of the name of John Field, Lieut RM, of Bristol, from our membership list, who has been anxious to contact any shipmates from HMS KENYA. Although not a new member, his name and address appears on the "Welcome Aboard" page.

Shipmate Arthur Stacey of Rugby is in hospital after the amputation of his right leg below the knee, following blood clot circulation problems. Get well soon Arthur. I learn that you are keen to join the tour party to Murmansk next year - we all hope you make it.

It is with pleasure that I can now name the hitherto 'mystery member' who made such a wonderful gesture in providing the club with a computer/word processor. He is Donald Skinner of Skinner Associates in Scotland to whom we are so very grateful. Dick says that this is going to cut down drastically on our work load once he has it fully set up. Ian Fraser of Nottingham has also made a generous financial arrangement with the Club in appreciation of the friendship he has experienced since joining us. The details are confidential and will not be published, although the committee have been informed. Ian Fraser is the artist who presented the picture to the Soviet Embassy which has been hung in the entrance hall. He has received several requests from members for paintings, but this will take sometime. Ian, please accept our sincere thanks for your kindness.

Commemorative Medals. Some confusion and misunderstanding is again being caused by the press and radio releases of further presentations or delivery of medals. There have been presentations aboard BELFAST, in Birmingham, Edinburgh and, most recently in Newcastle. These are not North Russia Club members, but those who's letters found their way to the embassy over a long period, as a

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spin off of our presentations and the subsequent media coverage. All of them had applied prior to the announcement that we published in the last newsletter which stated that "Now that the allocation of the Commemorative Medal, struck more than two years ago has been completed, new applications for this medal are no longer accepted". I realise, appreciate and understand the disappointment of new members of N.R.C. who have not, and now appear will not be in receipt of the Commemorative Medal. The medal was designed for the 40th Anniversary, now long past. 520 members of NRC received theirs on the 41st and 42nd anniversaries respectively. I am sorry about this as it was my wish and desire that all members would be in receipt of the medal. Your understanding of the situation would be most appreciated. But let's see what 1988 might bring, when I get the chance of looking into the possibility and viability of a 'hat trick'.

As we head into 1988, a brief resume of a busy hectic and enjoyable 1987. It started in February with the mini-reunion on BELFAST. In March the first big reunion of the year at the Union Jack Club. In May a further successful night on BELFAST, and in July the ladies joined us at the Union Jack Club. In September, the last of the year's mini-reunions on Belfast. October, and our 3rd. Annual Dinner Dance at the Swallow Hotel, South Normanton, Derbyshire, attended by Alexei Nikiforov as Principal Guest, Dennis Whitehouse, Chairman of the Club and guest speaker responding to the Toast to the Guests, Barry Townsend, Commodore of Kent Boat & Ski Club at Rochester, (host club for the London/Home Counties Dinner Dance on 12th December). Judging by your many complimentary letters and phone calls received by Dick and I, a good time was held by all. As one member put it in his letter, "It was non-rank, non-political, non-religious, and I personally was impressed with the quietness and politeness of everybody I met. The re-union had unquestionably a unique atmosphere and perhaps the most striking feature of the whole event was that one was in the company of humble men. I have been to other naval reunions but never one quite like this and I will certainly return to future reunions".

The coach tour in the forenoon was equally enjoyed in spite of the driver taking us to the wrong castle (which was a right 'Bolsover'). This was followed by the most enjoyable and kind hospitality of the Mansfield R.N.A. at lunch time. A presentation of an N.R.C. Wall Shield, suitably engraved with their title on the scroll, was made in appreciation of their kindness and hospitality. Finally, the year was rounded off with a small 3rd Anniversary of our Foundation Re-union at the Victory Services Club, Marble Arch, London. Seems like one long round of **gaiety and pleasure**. I would be remiss if I did not tender our thanks to all of you who have provided raffle prizes and to those who have supported the raffles. The proceeds of these have ensured that our functions have not been a drain on club resources.

On a more serious note, we held our first Annual General Meeting which put our formative years behind us and produced a Constitution that should stand the club in good stead for many years to come. You have already received a copy of the constitution. The meeting was held prior to the Members and Ladies Night at the Union Jack Club. To complete the final two Medal Presentations at the Soviet Embassy on 17th June for Southern members and the 24th for the Northern lads. Both presentations were followed by small re-unions at U.J.C.

Now into 1988, for your diaries the following functions have been organised and confirmed for your pleasure and entertainment. BELFAST dates will be promulgated in the next Newsletter as they do not set up their Bookings Diary until January 1988. All other dates are definite:-

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Saturday 12th March.	Members Reunion Buffet.	Union Jack Club,	Limit 125.
Saturday ? May.	Members Reunion Buffet.	H.M.S.Belfast.	Limit 50.
Saturday 2nd July.	Members & Ladies Reunion Buffet.	}----- (Victory Services Marble Arch L'd'n.	Limit 180.
Saturday ? Sept.	Members Reunion Buffet.		
Saturday 15th Oct.	4th. Annual Reunion)	}----- (at a venue in the Midlands.	Limit 400 approx.
Saturday 3rd Dec.	Dinner Dance)		
	4th Anniversary Formation, Members Reunion Buffet.)	}----- (Victory Services Club, Marble Arch, London.	(Limit 180.)

This programme should give you all a wide and varied choice to select from.

Now that the administrative work has eased (or will do when we reach the magical 700) both Dick and I will have time for other things. Dick is all ready to put the club's records on to the computer etc. For me, I hope to go "Full Steam Ahead" with the final compilation of the manuscript for my book, putting together the most interesting and valued material of my researches. This work has been seriously neglected recently but everyone has been very patient. A new Publisher is pressing for compilation by June 1988, for publication, once accepted, in February 1989. (A good time to tell the story of the Arctic). I think additional interest is shown because the average first run of a new book, is apparently 1,000 and I have told him that I estimate that 500 have already been sold. How's that for confidence?

I close with the sincere wish that you have enjoyed 1987 as a member of the North Russia Club and that your interest and support will continue into 1988. Anything I have done, although time consuming, has been an honour and pleasure. The club's success has been beyond my wildest dreams, as in just over three years 700 have joined, many reunited after 45 years and many from the same ships or units. This has given me a great kick. We have rejoined the 'Andrew', experiencing the old camaraderie, without a bloody war. Whilst rightly proud of what is considered to be an achievement, none of it would have been possible without your support and interest. It is all very gratifying.

Best Wishes and "Good on 'yer" for Xmas and the New Year.

Sincerely, *Alexei Nikiforov*

Now over to Dick for details of the proposed tour of Russia next May.

To date (5th Nov. '87) I have compiled a list of 123 members, wives and friends who wish to be informed of the final details of the tour. I had hoped that I could have published these now, but Alexei Nikiforov is at present negotiating with Moscow regarding reductions in the prices quoted by Intourist, London. No doubt, that with a bit of 'embassy muscle' behind him he has a good chance of success.

The tour is being planned so that we would be in Murmansk during the Victory Day Celebrations on May 9th. Our first port of call will be Moscow, followed by Murmansk, then Leningrad. Special arrangements for visits to places that would specially interest us are being arranged by the Soviet War Veteran's Central Committee and their branches in the three cities. (S.W.V.C. is similar to our British Legion and is funded by the state.) All accommodation will be in first class hotels, all of which have been sampled by our members during the two small tours in 1987. All travel between Moscow and Murmansk and Murmansk and Leningrad will be by air; thus avoiding the tiring overnight train journeys. (Moscow to Murmansk is 950 miles, Murmansk to Leningrad is 400 miles)

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The total all-in London to London, plus visa, etc. is expected to be around £440 per person. As the interest shown is higher than expected it may be necessary to limit final numbers. So it's first come, first served. Those interested should write to me at 28 Westbrook Rd., Liverpool L25 2PX. There is no commitment at this stage and those who have already contacted me need not do so again.

INCIDENT AT SACRED ROCK

During late November 1941, H.M.S. HUSSAR was ordered to rendezvous with a Russian submarine at the above location. The object of the exercise was to take a Russian admiral aboard and give him passage to a destination near Archangel.

The Russian code for this location was 'Sacred Rock', but to our skipper, Lieut-Comdr. D.H. Palmer-Gardner (who disliked Russia and anything connected with it), it was 'Sweaty Feet'. We had onboard a Soviet Liaison Officer, known as Lieut Sergei, who was not too pleased with our skipper's attitude.

Promptly at 1500 hours, the submarine surfaced and came alongside. A gangway was run out, all the ship's officers were lined up in order of seniority, the side party assembled to pipe 'his nibs' aboard. Everything went like clockwork, the old boy came up the gangway and saluted the quarterdeck in the traditional manner.

Then, to the consternation of all present, he proceeded to shake hands with the Chief Bosun's Mate, and embrace him like a long lost brother. After that, he proceeded forr'd to the Stoker's Messdeck, ignoring the officers completely. He did the rounds of the messdeck before Sergei appeared, then after some conversation he retired aft to the Wardroom.

After this fracas we got under weigh and landed him somewhere up the Dvina River - to the great relief of all concerned.

Ted Worthy. ex-HMS HUSSAR.

SOUVENIRS

Reading the article 'Run Ashore' reminded me of an incident in which I was the principal character.

On arrival at Polyarnee with Naval Party 100 our passports were surrendered and we were issued with a small Russian document known as a 'Propusk'. This of course, we were supposed to carry at all times, (you all probably know that!) Near to the time that I was due to return to UK I had the notion to retain my 'Propusk' as a souvenir. So I reported it missing or lost, and for a couple of weeks nothing happened.

One day whilst 'enjoying' a meal at the 'Corner House' I was called outside by an officer. Once outside I was told to march to the Dom. in which we lived. I then realised that with one man in front of me, another behind and the officer alongside me, I was sort of under arrest. They took me to the locker area and searched all my kit. I asked what they were looking for and they replied 'Propusk'.

Unfortunately, I had stowed away in my long leather boots a small White Ensign and a Red Navy Flag - also intended as souvenirs! They did not find the 'Propusk'.

Eventually, I was weighed off for misappropriation of Government Property, namely two flags. By this time I had missed my draft home and had to stay on until NP 100 was paid off.

The 'Propusk'? Somewhere in the Kola Inlet attached to a bit of lead stolen from a confidential bag.

Impetuous Youth!!!

Ernie Skelton. ex-NP 100.

WELCOME ABOARD TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS ENROLLED UP TO 5/11/87:

ANNAND John.	1319N Havenhurst Drive III, W. Hollywood, Calif. 90Q46	AVENGER
ANNISS Percy.	23 Uffington Road, Barnack, Nr. Stamford, Lincs.	DIANELLA
AYLMORE L.A.	34 Woodlands Dr., Crossford, Dunfermline, Fife.	ALYNBANK
BAILEY E.A.S.	Capt RN, Paladin, Hilltop Lane, Kilve, Bridgewater.	ASHANTI
BAKER H.	117 Central Ave, Gravesend, Kent.	NIGERIA
BATAILLIE J.	Apt. 238 Res. Fenelon, 105 Ave des Bains, Dunkerque.	MINERVE
BOARD V.	The Old Smithy, Chilton Polden, Somerset.	TYNWALD
BRADBURY D.	22 Helmdon Rd, Sunnyside, Northampton.	WAKEFUL
COLEY W.	71 Brinkburn Ave, Darlington, Durham.	TRACKER
CORS J.	11 Middleford House, Silcox Rd, Hartcliffe, Bristol.	EM. CARPENTER
CUTHBERTSON L.	113 Whitton Rd, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland.	TRUMPETER
DEEGAN R.	14 Strawberry Rd, Norris Green, Liverpool.	LIVERPOOL
FELL A.	9 Greystone Drive, Bilborough, Nottingham.	TRACKER
FIELD J.	Lieut RM. 99 Dovercourt Rd, Horfield, Bristol, Avon.	KENYA
FISHER S.	41 Winchilsea Ave, Newart, Nottinghamshire.	WALKER
GILLIGAN T.	120 Marshalls Cross Rd, St Helens, Merseyside.	OCEAN VERITY
GRAIN G.	Fioresta, Pinewood Dr, Newton, Newbury, Berks.	TRACKER
GROUTAGE S.	57 Albion St, Exmouth, Devon.	BAMBOROUGH CASTLE
GUEST L.	2 Seddon Close, Atherton, Greater Manchester	TRACKER
HORNE A.	20 Hamble Rd, Sompthing, Lancing, Sussex.	SEARCHER
HOUGHTON W.	42 Abbey Dr, Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Leicestershire.	BELFAST
HOWES A.	20 Coleshill Rd, Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands.	TRACKER
HUNT R.	166 Vardon Way, Kings Norton, Birmingham	CAESAR
JOHNSTON P.	Villa Montrose, Zona Boverals 76F, 12500, Vinaroz, Castellon, Spain.	ZEST
JONES Ted.	2 Millfields Ave, Hillmorton, Rugby, Warwick.	MOHAWK
JORDAN J.	19 Cornwall Road, Walmer, Deal, Kent.	TRACKER
KERR J.	51 Woodburn Medway, Dalkieth, Midlothian.	MOHAWK
LEWIS G.H.	39 Portland Rd, Aberystwyth, Dyfed.	EMPIRE METEOR
LOCKWOOD R.	52 Brooklands Front, Jaywick, Clacton, Essex.	NIGERIA
LOVE J.	253 Collington Road, Saltash, Cornwall.	INGLEFIELD
LOWE E.	Tanatside, Stocks Lane, Over Peover, Chesh.	151 WING VYANGA
MANSFIELD T.J.	229 Whitbourne Ave., Swindon, Wilts.	MATABELE
NOBLE J.	255 Te Atau Rd, Te Atatu, Auckland, New Zealand.	CAESAR
NYE G.	338 Sidewood Rd, New Eltham, London SE9 2HA.	MARTIN
PARR S.	55 Neston Dr., Hollydene Pk., Cincerhill, Notts.	RODNEY
PLEDGER W.	181 Limeside Close, Corringham, Essex.	HONEYSUCKLE
PRICE P.	5 Seaside Close, Lancing, Sussex.	POZARICA
PROSSER A.	70 Bayham Road, Knowle, Bristol.	CAESAR
RILEY W.	36 Hannan Road, Kensington, Liverpool.	STARLING
ROUSELL J.	2 Wick Lane, Felpham, Bognor Regis, Sussex.	BELLONA
ROWE J.	Avalon, Church Hill, Helions, Bumpstead, Suffolk.	MARNE
SMITH F.W.	121 Briar Gate, Long Eaton, Nottinghamshire.	FURIOUS
STEPHENS H.	Pine View, 2 Jessopp Close, Hedhill, Bournemouth.	VINDEX
STRANGWAYS H.	110 Lower Town End Rd, Wooldale, Holmfirth, W. Yorks.	K.G.V.
TUBMAN E.	54 Summerfield Avenue, Whitstable, Kent.	SOMALI
ULYATT F.	28 Rugby Rd, Rainworth, Mansfield, Notts.	ICARUS
WATSON J.	57 Teasel Avenue, Conniburrow, Milton Keynes.	KEPPEL
WHITE J.	18 Tunworth Close, Slough Lane, Kingsbury, London.	NORFOLK
WHITE H.	80 Lakeside Avenue, Lydney, Gloucestershire.	NABOB
WREN R.J.	13 Sherwood Avenue, Potters Bar, Herts.	KENYA
YOUNG J.	6 Raleigh Way, Hanworth, Middlesex.	BELLONA

AHOY! ALL MEMBERS! Is your name and address on our mailing list correct? If not, please let the editor know at once - before we transfer the list to our computer.

Newsletter page 4.

WHAT IS A MATELOT? A matelot dislikes Middles, Jimmies, Herrings In, Watch Aboard, Church Parades on the Jetty and Crushers. He has been known to dislike other matelots (if they are foreign or from another ship), Fuelling Ship, Scrubbing Out and Dishing Up, but once again not in that particular order.

A PEN PICTURE

Pride of place in our series of pen-pictures of your committee, has quite rightly, been given to our Art Artificer, Les Lawrence. Les of course, is responsible for our cover, the Blue Nose Certificate, and the sketches that appear in Northern Light. He says, "I'm 64, with a 'dodgy' knee", so that makes him one of the younger members of N.R.C. and as for the 'dodgy' knee - we have all got 'dodgy' bits by now Les!

Before the war he was employed as a Commercial Artist and joined the Andrew in 1942. He first served at Skegness and the Port War Signal Station at Blyth, having reached the dizzy height of Signalmen T/O. Between 1943 - 45 he served on the old V and W. destroyer WESTCOTT, doing seven arctic cruises - six to Kola Inlet and one to Archangel. He also did several Iceland stints and Gibraltar convoys, E-boat patrols and escort to H.M.S. WARSPIRE on D-Day. After the war he did a trip to the States to return a clapped-out frigate to U.S. Navy and came home in style on R.M.S. QUEEN MARY, for demob.

Back in Civvy Street, he first became a Poster Artist, then a Display Manager and next Display and Advertising Manager. In 1967 he entered education as Assistant Lecturer and is now Senior Lecturer in charge of Display Design Courses at Cassin College. Les started a small business venture, 'Retail Display Service' in 1966, this is still going reasonably well and he intends to devote more time to it when he retires next year.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, (FRSA), and a Licentiate Member of the British Display Society, (LBDS), as well as being a member of that society's National Education Committee. He is author of 'Expanded Polystyrene Craft' published in 1977 and still available in libraries.

His 'dodgy' knee does not prevent him from following several of his hobbies. He has had a life-long interest in the Scout movement and is a past chairman of the Old Scout Committee of London. He also likes long distance walking - having walked the Pennine Way, some sections more than once, the Ridgeway Path and Exmoor and Dartmoor. (He didn't start that lark until he was 50, and then with another ex-matelot). He also likes painting seascapes as well as reading, and to show his versatility he competes two annual charity shows.

Les is married to Edith and they have one daughter and one grand-daughter.

Thanks for your support of N.R.C. Les, may your pen never run dry.



LES SAYS, "MERRY CHRISTMAS, COCKS"

LAUGH OF THE MONTH

(From Jago's Mansions)

by Maurice Cross, ex HMS Seagull

As a green OD straight from Signal School, I dropped an almighty clanger in Jago's Mansions. The Mess Killick told me to give a hand stewing hammocks - this I did with great enthusiasm. We finished the job at tet time (I was UA). The grizzled old killick (all of 35 years old) preffered me his tot. "Here you are young 'un" he said, "Sippers!" Not being genned up in this tet routine, I thought I would impress the old salts and so downed the lot (at 4 in 1 nearly half a pint). I stood there gasping with tears in my eyes.

The Killick's benevolent smile froze. Amazement was followed by fury. "What, what" he sputtered in rage, "What the friggin' hell have you done? I said Sippers not Grounders!"; he fought for breath, "Sippers is for small favours, Gulpers is for big favours and Grounders is for SAVING MY FRIGGING LIFE!:"

His mates rolled about, I stood there red faced and embarrassed. "I've a good mind to fill you in!" he roared. Then suddenly he gave a great guffaw, "Well I'm boegered" he said, "an OD seeing off my tot - you friggin' HO's, whats the Andrew coming to! go on shove off young 'un, before I hang you by your private parts!"

My fame spread. I was frequently stepped around the barracks "Here, is it right you saw off the Mess Killick's tot?". Eventually I decided to brazen it out. "Oh yes" I would airily reply, "you know what it's like when you're bored".

Remember Jago's Mansions? Remember the fiendish feeding system? Two dining halls were about 30ft apart and when one filled up with hungry matelots, the Duty P.O. would shout out "Other side", then the queue would rush across to the other hall. This 'other side' caper would occur about 10 times per dinner hour.

Cunningly situated between the doors of the halls was a brick-built sandbag enclosure, which ensured a classic example of the first shall be last and the last, first. As you reached the head of the queue with the tantalizing aroma of lobcouse and pusser's peas tickling your nostrils, there was a severe risk of the PO shouting "Other side" the hungry herde then stampeding to the other hall. But alas, the first part of the queue being hampered by the sandbag enclosure, would find themselves way back in the new queue, to the sound of great lamentations and Anglo-Saxon comment.

On one occasion, a Stoker, obviously at the end of his tether, siezed the PO by his jacket lapels. "Other side!" he screamed "what d'ya mean, Other side? This is the fourth time I've had the Other side from you and I'm still starved". He was taken away, gently frothing at the mouth and mumbling "Other Side, Other Side". So if you were caught in this cunning trap, then you just gave up and spent your money in the NAAFI on a fry-up.



POET'S CORNER

THE BONDS OF TIME

Two score years ago, and more
 In these grey, grim and dangerous days
 When we, who have survived that time
 Were young, and life was fair -
 Went forth to war.
 And took our many ways, ashore, afloat,
 As destiny decreed.
 Some to destroyers, cruisers,
 Shore stations, men of war, the
 Battleships, carriers perhaps -
 Others again to humbler craft
 Minesweepers, corvettes, submarines
 Patrol craft, Beam defence-
 Each in their own small world
 Equally important in the tasks they did
 And further too, some manned
 Our Merchant Fleet
 In cargo ships or tankers,
 With their laden, vital goods,
 In liners too, on trooping, or
 As make shift warships,
 Indeed, a gallant host -
 In conveyed might.

To those who sailed the
 Dreaded Russian Run,
 Perhaps there is a special link
 In that we are again as one
 Together, united by -
 The ties of Yesteryear-
 Renewing friendships that
 Were forged in bitter
 Arctic chill-
 Etched deep in memory yet.
 Our Russian Allies, too,
 To whom we sought to help,
 They have their own cruel
 Past in mind.
 Stamped deep within their hearts
 And now that we've renewed
 Our ties with them,
 Which takes us back to perils
 Shared in war torn days
 'Tis right that we remember
 That together we fought -
 A common foe
 And won, through sacrifice
 So great indeed
 History will tell it all in full,
 To those who follow on
 For now, for us,
 The Bonds of Time run
 Swift and Strong.

Bill Johnston, Whitby. ex-NP 100 and HMS Tracker.

An insight of conditions and incidents at the WW II P.O.W. Camp for merchant seamen, Marlag Milag Nord, near Bremen are to be found in the diary of Edwin Tiffle, P.O.W. No 89401, which can be found in the Imperial War Museum.

Price of goods in November 1944. (Rate of exchange was 10 Reichmarks to £1. Each P.O.W. was credited with 5 R.marks per month as a 'loan' from the British Government. A pair of socks were 30 marks (£3); a pair of boots 300 marks (£30); a tin of milk 60 marks (£6); 6 oz of sugar 20 marks (£2); 2 oz of tea 80 marks (£8); a loaf of bread 80 marks (£8) and 12 oz of corned beef also £8. By March 1945 most prices had risen by at least 300%.

The following quotations in letters from home that were received by some unfortunate inmates are surprising:

Dear Daddy, "I have just been to put flowers on Grandad's grave, I wish it was yours. I am very busy now teaching my new daddy to speak English".

Dear Jim, "I hope you wont take this too bad, but I have decided to marry a young soldier who is doing something for his country, not like you wasting your time behind barbed wire for four years".

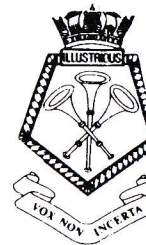
Darling Joe, "You may be surprised to hear after you have been away for two years that I have given birth to a baby boy. You may have some doubt about this, but dont worry, the doctor says it is after the same style as a delayed action bomb". P.S. "You will be glad to hear that a Canadian Officer is sending you some cigarettes".

Dear Bill, "Have just discovered why you are not getting my letters. I have been addressing them to Deutschland not Germany".

Dear Jim, "You will be pleased to hear that I have had the best time I have ever had since we were married. Keep your chin up dear, as I am going to the same place with the same fellow next year so I will be okay".

Dear Sam, "A batch of sick men have just arrived home from Germany, they were all badly mutilated and crippled or had a very serious illness. Hope to see you in the next batch".

MY DARLING CHILDREN



Dear Dick,you will note that I have typed this letter on 'Old Illustrians' notepaper. I would, Richard, through your good offices like to put out an appeal and ask for any Old Illustrians out there to get in touch with me - at the dip.

It may interest you and club members that at this moment I am negotiating with a publisher for the publication of a book 'MY DARLING CHILDREN' - from a quotation from the letters of Lord Nelson, referring to his sailors, "They are, and I glory in them, my darling children"; foreword by Sir Michael Hordern, actor Knight; an Old Illustrian. In the foreword he says ".....or on those horrific Russian convoys which this country, not to mention the Russians, should never be allowed to forget".

My Commemorative Medal tells me that the Russians, at least, have not forgotten.

A recurring theme throughout the book, and in the prologue and epilogue, is LET US NOT FORGET BRAVE MEN AND PROUD SHIPS. I hope to make the bookstalls for Christmas. Wish me luck.

Yours aye

W.W. Griffiths.
 ex-DENBIGH CASTLE.

By John Beardmore, Lieut RNVR, ex-navigating Officer, HMS POPPY.

The following letter of mine was published in the October edition, in response to what I regarded as a slight snide comment by Captain Charlton about the "shame of the Royal Navy" on the occasion of PQ 17. I think that this will still be of interest to our members, especially if their ships are mentioned.

"The events of PQ17, the worst convoy disaster of WWII, are now well and truly documented and the reputation of the late Captain (then Commander) Broome RN finally vindicated in the famous libel action against Cassels in 1970. Nevertheless, it is largely forgotten that, due mostly to the initiative shown by the smaller escort vessels (corvettes, trawlers and minesweepers skippered by RNR and RNVR officers and crewed by HO ratings), most of whom tacitly ignored the Admiralty's directive to proceed independantly to Archangel and headed instead for Matochkin Straits, the remnants of the scattered convoy were eventually gathered together on and off the coast of Novaya Zemlya. Over a traumatic period of two weeks, one third of PQ 17 were finally shepherded into Archangel intact, together with 1,200 merchant navy survivors from the ships that were lost.

The Admiralty's decision to prematurely scatter the convoy in view of the 'imminent' Tirpitz menace proved, in the end, to be wrong one. The destroyers under Captain Broome RN withdrew to place themselves between the convoy and a much larger enemy who did not, as it turned out, materialise. Of the smaller war vessels, the corvette LOTUS and the trawler AYRSHIRE covered themselves with glory (both their C.Os receiving the D.S.O.), while the rest of the smaller escort, corvettes POPPY, LA MALOINE and DIANELLA, trawlers LORD AUSTIN, LORD MIDDLETON and NORTHERN GEM, and minesweepers HALCYON, BRITOMART and SALAMANDER, by then very low on fuel, and two 13½-knot cumbersome 'banana boats' converted to ack-ack ships PALOMARES and POZARICA, did the best they could for the surviving ships, under very difficult circumstances.

Within one hour of 'Scatter', the convoy was spread out on a 35-mile front heading in all directions except west. It would have been virtually impossible to reform it again. The naval crews stranded in the White Sea all that summer, as well as the survivors, suffered unbelievable privations in the land of our brave allies. Those on the naval vessels ended up by having to open the tins of ship's biscuits lashed in their own lifeboats to supplement their low rations and later suffered the stigma of 'ratting on the convoy' when many of the survivors (especially the U.S. ones) were repatriated. The Admiralty remained silent and it was not until twelve years after the war had ended that Admiral Tovey (C-in-C Home Fleet at the time of PQ 17) was allowed to publish his own despatches in the 'London Gazette', telling the whole truth and apportioning the blame where it was due - not on the R.N. afloat, but on the Admiralty in Whitehall. Obviously (and how easy it is to be wise after the event), PQ 17 would have stood a better chance had it been allowed to stick together as a convoy, in spite of the threat of the Tirpitz, the 240 air sorties and the two dozen U-boats that we afterwards learned were directed against it.

PQ 17 was doomed from the start and became the 'Balaclava' of WWII. Godfrey Winn, who had bravely volunteered to sail in PQ 17 as a civilian war correspondent for the Beaverbrook Press (not the M of I, incidentally) found his call up papers awaiting his return. He joined the Royal Navy as an ordinary seaman - only to find himself back on the Russian run again in the cruiser CUMBERLAND.

Notice to prepare to board a Russian destroyer, (which was worked, of course, on a rota system) was always short, but the few preparations necessary were quickly completed.

The number one priority from our point of view, was a sack, an ordinary common or garden sack! into which would be put the necessary sustenance for two people, covering a trip of approximately four days. Said sustenance would depend on what was available in the stores and usually consisted of things like baked beans, sardines, Spam of course, fruit, and dont forget the tin opener!! As our time would be spent entirely in the wireless office for the whole trip, we would not have access to cooking facilities - so, 'straight from the tin' had to suffice.

Another important sack we had to take (officially of course the more important one!) was a strong, specially made canvas one, with a lot of brass eyeleted holes in it, to contain the confidential books, etc.

The ГРЕМЯЩИЙ (Gremyashy) type destroyers were Italian built, very fast and tending to be a bit top heavy. This was more noticeable when maneuvering in a sea. There were three wireless offices on board, one of which was situated on the upper deck just abaft the funnel, forming part of the main upperworks - the best target to aim for in action! This was the one allocated to the British Telegraphists. For the benefits of those who may be wondering what Jolly Jack was doing on board, I should explain that the Russians did not read International Morse Code to the best of our knowledge, and in any case did not have access to the necessary code books. It was our job to read the signals, decode them and pass them to the liaison officer. As those of you who were in the convoy escorts are well aware, things tended to get a bit hairy on occasions. The fact that a Befors type gun was mounted on each side of the platform on which the wireless office was situated, made it very difficult to read signals when these guns were in action - which was frequently. It was a constant irritation to COs of ships of the escort that the Russians persisted in opening fire with close range weapons at aircraft that were no more than specks in the sky! I recall an incident at night when the main armament was brought into action firing at an iceberg that was identified as an enemy battleship. But I suppose that was better than having the opposite occur.

Conservation of ammunition did not appear to be a Russian practice and after one particularly sustained action with aircraft, it was not possible to open the office door, it being jammed with a considerable depth of shell cases, and I still dont know if they hit anything!

An ordeal to be suffered aboard the destroyer was a visit to the heads, the only place where the crew were allowed to smoke and you really had to be in need to sit in a cubicle, without a door in an area inevitably packed with seamen, creating an atmosphere that was never experienced on a British ship! All the Russian ratings appeared to carry a newspaper which they tore into strips to serve as cigarette

papers. Into the newspaper was put a peculiar tobacco called MAXOPKA (Machorka), this looked like bird seed. The ends were twisted tight and when a match was lit the atmosphere of the heads - which was already devoid of anything like disinfectant anyway - was filled with an extremely pungent smoke akin to a lot of rubbish bonfires including old motor tyres. The last thing you wanted was a bit of constipation to prolong your stay!!

One trip I did on Gremashy was when efforts were being made to get the Edinburgh back to the Kela Inlet. We circled the crippled cruiser whilst the minesweepers were taking off the crew - providing an anti-submarine sweep and anti-aircraft protection, whilst three German Maas Class destroyers were doing their best to stop the efforts by shelling with 5" guns. I believe the Germans were eventually driven off by our destroyers Forrester and Forsight. The Russian destroyer returned to Pelyarnee after making repeated requests to the base, claiming a shortage of fuel. I don't think everybody was entirely satisfied with the claim.

On one occasion my colleague and I agreed to join the Russians on the messdeck - which was only possible on return to harbour. We had to crawl through small hatchways to reach the messdeck where their meal was being prepared. Large tins of fish, like tuna, had been opened and placed on the mess table alongside large piles of black bread. With a piece of bread in one hand and a fork in the other to take the fish from the tins we proceeded with the meal - all accompanied by sips of vodka. This was followed by the almost inevitable tin plate of compot - a very pleasant mixture of small fruits and berries stewed in a sweet juice. This was well known to us ashore as 'Jungle Juice'.

Altogether the whole atmosphere on board Russian destroyers was completely different to that on our own ships; but the crew really did their best to welcome us and be as friendly as their way of life allowed. We were very grateful for their efforts in getting us things like white bread, butter and sugar for our tea and coffee - which they did not get themselves.

Our stay on board was only a short one each time but it is something unique to be able to say that one spent time at sea in Russian destroyers. And I got special attention from those whom I met on my recent return to the frozen North earlier this year.

Les Sullivan ex-NP 100 and GREMYASHY.



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR
GREETINGS TO YOU ALL
FROM
THE OFFICERS AND
COMMITTEE.