



PRICE £2 (Free to Members)

© PUBLISHED BY R. D. SQUIRES, FOR NORTH RUSSIA CLUB
AND PRINTED BY KAMPRESS AT
GREEN DRAGON LANE, ST. MARY STREET, BRIDGWATER, SOMERSET, TA6 3EL



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH RUSSIA CLUB

39
12/94

12/94

DIRECTORY OF CLUB OFFICIALS

- PATRON:** Rear Admiral A.B. Richardson, CB.
- PRESIDENT:** C.B.TYE, 5 Begonia Avenue, Gillingham, Kent ME8 6YD.
Tel: 0634 232884
- DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** J.R.DAVIS, 17 Walton Avenue, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 8QU.
Tel: 081 422 4760
- CHAIRMAN/EDITOR:** R.D.SQUIRES, MBE, 28 Westbrook Road, Gateacre, Liverpool,
L25 2PX. Tel: 051 487 9567
- VICE-CHAIRMAN:** D.ALLEN, Tel: 0233 637250.
11 Wiston Avenue, Ashford, Kent TN21 1LY.
- HON. SECRETARY:** P.A.SKINNER, The Anchorage, Burscott, Higher Clovelly,
Bideford, Devon EX39 5RR. Tel: 0237 431481
- HON. TREASURER:** E.S.R.PHELPS, 89 Tyle Teg, Burry Port, Llanelli,
Dyfed SA16 0SR. Tel: 0554 834 935.
- WELFARE OFFICER:** A.D.HORNE, 30 Hamble Road, Sompting, Lancing,
Sussex BN15 0ES. Tel: 0903 762466
- HON. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:** L.A.SULLIVAN, 2 Broadlawn, Woolavington,
Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 8EP. Tel: 0278 683579
- "JACK DUSTY" (Slops):** S. BATEMAN, 70 Nickleby House, All Saints Road,
Portsmouth, Hants PO1 4EL. Tel: 0705 817775
- COMMITTEE:** L.JONES (National & Northern Reunions) Tel 0257 791632.
(With special duties where applicable) 35 Neargates, Charnock Richard, Chorley, Lancs PR7 5EX.
- M.WILLIAMS (Southern & South Reunions) Tel:0703 775875.
87 Olive Road, Coxford, Southampton SO1 6FT
- J.ROUSELL (Southern Reunions) Tel; 0243 583479
2 Wick Lane, Felpham, Bognor Regis, Sussex
- D.BROOKE (Art Work) Tel: 0424 444548
5 Gloucester Cottages, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 3HN
- A.BYRNE (Minute Secretary) Tel: 0274 881821
28 Southlands Grove, Thornton, Bradford, West Yorks BD13 3DG
- J.CLARKE Tel: 0708 520685.
67 Hayes Drive, Rainham, Essex RM13 7EL.
- T.W.ADAMS BEM. Tel 051 632 3980.
23 Derwent Road, Meols, Wirral, Merseyside L47 8XY.
- W.FORD (Reunions M.C.) Tel: 051 428 3247.
20 Dee House, Ribble Road, Gateacre, Liverpool L25 5PR.
- G.SHELTON Tel: 0702 292041
70 Caulfield Road, Shoeburyness, Essex SS3 9LN
- R.J.WREN Tel: 0707 655846
13 Sherwood Avenue, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 2LD.
- Captain G.M.BRYSON MN. Tel 0704 578553
25 Daneway, Ainsdale, Southport PR8 2QW
- W.P.SHORT. Tel: 0383 726726
102 Thistle Street, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 0JA



" FOR THOSE IN PERIL . . . "

*SEASONAL GREETINGS***FROM OUR PATRON**

"It is entirely fitting that in this, the tenth year of the North Russia Club, so much has been achieved. Be it in Plymouth or Liverpool by dedicating memorials to those who lost their lives in the North, or by quietly supporting and comforting those who have needed a friendly hand, or simply by enjoying the company of very special shipmates. The club has had an excellent year, and I congratulate all who have participated and worked to make it so.

It is also fitting that the media coverage being focused on the 50th anniversaries of so many historic WW II campaigns has had the effect, and will continue to do so next year, of educating and reminding the nation what organisations such as the North Russia Club are all about. And that is as it should be.

So as 1994 comes to an end after a very successful twelve months, and we look forward to '95 and all that it stands for, it is with the greatest of pleasure that I tell you how proud I am to be associated with the NRC and to be its Patron. Thank you for making Kitty and I so welcome whenever we have joined you at the various reunions. We both look forward enormously to the opportunity of meeting and making more friends in the forthcoming year. Meanwhile, please accept our joint best wishes for a very, very happy Christmas and contented New Year"

Brnr
Admiral A.B. Richardson, C.B.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It seems so little time ago, how it flies when one is supposed to be retired, as 1994 heads to its close with Christmas and the New Year.

It has been another good year for our unique club, with further new events. The delegation to Russia in the presence of H.M. The Queen and the 10th anniversary of our formation recognised with two special reunions.

Sadly, I remember, many of our members who have "Crossed The Bar", yet many others have joined us and been Welcomed Aboard". Who would have thought that so many of us lucky ones would still be around.

In sending my greetings for Christmas please join me at 1100 on 25 December in a toast to "Absent Shipmates" - whether before 1946, 1984 or since, and to those who are still with us, the sincere wish that you enjoy Christmas and keep fit, well and happy in 1995, the 50th anniversary of the end of the war and in our own minds, the conflict in the Arctic in which we took part.

Happy Christmas to you all, and to those who I have had the pleasure of meeting and who know me as "El-Presidente".

Sincerely
John B. - 1994

EDITORIAL

Taking the sound advice from our worthy treasurer, we have an agreement that the editor keeps each edition of Northern Light to a 52 page limit! Well, it's Christmas and we have the special topic of "Survivors & Survival", plus several very important items to relate to you. Such as the club's representation at the State Visit to Russia, the return to Murmansk, the sponsored Para-Jump etc. So here is your 52 page edition - all seventy-two pages of it!!! I'VE DONE JANKERS BEFORE? SO WHY WORRY?

The response from our contributors has been unbelievable. Starting with our resident artist who has captured the Survivors - cum-Xmas theme perfectly in his frontispiece (or should I say masterpiece?) Then the survivors - you will find 40 pages of their experiences, all interesting and many that should have been told years ago - you will also find some typical mateloe's humour amongst some of them. But please read page 70 which features the Para-Jump undertaken by our own Gus Britton. Thanks to all contributors you should all now have several 'Happy Hours' of reading!

The theme for the next edition in March is "CONVOY PQ18" We have received a couple of excellent articles but require several more. Please forward them to me by mid-JANUARY.

The following editions will have themes "V.E. and V.J. DAYS" - WHERE WERE YOU? copy by mid-April, and "HOSTILITIES ONLY", copy by mid-JULY, please.

Finally, on behalf of the editorial staff (Peg and I), may we wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.

R.D.SQUIRES MBE. Chairman

o o o o o o o o o o o o



Dick Squires introduces Peter Skinner and Mervyn Williams to Her Majesty.

NEW ISSUE XMAS CARDS

+++++
SET OF SEVEN CARDS
(All different)

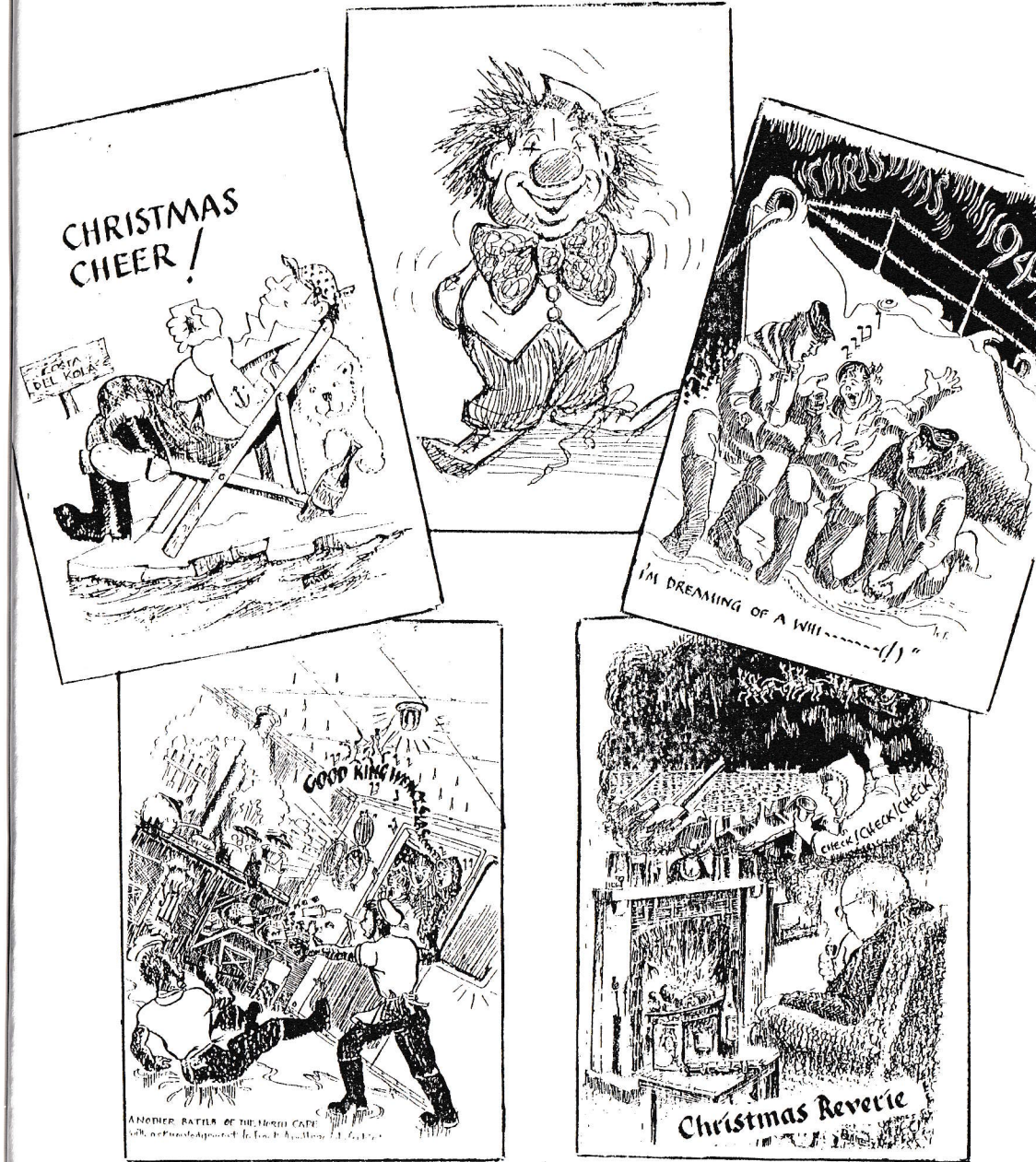
+++++
PRINTED ON QUALITY WHITE CARD
IN TWO COLOURS

+++++
Actual Size 4" x 5 1/2"
Christmas Message Inside

+++++
PRICE
£2.00 per set including envelopes

+++++
FROM
Sid Bateman or Les Sullivan
(Addresses inside front cover)

+++++
HURRY, HURRY, HURRY!
+++++



NORTH RUSSIA CLUB
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS-YEAR 1 APRIL 1993-31 MARCH 1994

<u>INCOME</u>	
To <u>Balances b/f 1992/93 A/cs:-</u>	
Bank Current a/c	£7847.35
Bank Deposit a/c	£7300.31
To Deposit a/c Interest (See Note 1)...	£ 33.51
To <u>Membership Subscriptions:-</u>	
1993/94 Renewals (See Note 2).....	£3450.50
1993/94 New Members	£ 769.00
1994/95 Renewals	£5007.00
1994/95 New Members (See Note 3)....	£ 192.00
Life Members (See Note 4)	£3300.00
To <u>Donations:-</u>	
General Fund	£1436.20
Welfare Fund	£ 345.00
To Payments received for A.C.M.T.	£ 109.90
To <u>Sales:-</u>	
Ties	£ 811.50
Blazer Badges	£ 484.50
Christmas Cards	£ 432.00
Convoy Books	£ 654.50
Miniature Medals	£ 653.25
Sundry Items	£1048.25
To Sales of Northern Light	£ 70.00
To Postage received for Sales Items ...	£ 161.70
<u>Profit on Reunions:-</u>	
Goodison Park Concert 25-5-93 (See Note 7)	£ 290.00
Royal Tournament 23-7-93 (See Note 8)	£ 390.00
Union Jack Club 24- 7-93	£ 37.67
Brookwood 25- 7-93	£ 13.00
Southampton 4- 9-93	£ 41.00
V. S. C. Supper 24-11-93	£ 45.25
H.M.S.Drake 8-12-93	£ 9.50
N.West Reunion 26- 3-94	£ 80.64
V. S. C. Lunch 23- 3-94	£ 95.20
To Welfare & Memorial Appeal Fund	£2450.88
To Spring Raffle	£4861.20
To Hastings Group of Members	£ 45.91
	<u>£42466.72</u>

NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

NOTE 1. Interest shown is up to 2-12-93. In November, 1993 deposit a/c was closed and money transferred into High Interest deposit a/c. Interest is only credited annually in December, on this a/c.

NOTE 2. 1993/94 Renewals. Reference to last year's a/cs will show that £4586.00 was included in the 1992/93 accounts in respect of 1993/94 subscriptions.

NOTE 3. NEW MEMBERS. This figure covers 1 overseas and 26 U.K. members who joined between 1/2/94 and 31/3/94.

NOTE 4. LIFE MEMBERS. Reference to 1992/1993 A/cs, show that 29 Life Members had paid £1740. This with the 55 who became Life Members in 1993/94 at 31/3/94 we had 84 Life Members.

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
By Bank Charges	£ 5.00
By Audit Fee 1992/93 A/cs	£ 75.00
By New brass bucket for Standard	£ 15.95
By Payments from Welfare Fund	£ 765.55
By Payments to A.C.M.T (See Note 5).....	£ 112.90
To Purchases:-	
Ties	£ 685.22
Blazer Badges	£ 314.66
Convoy Books	£ 350.00
Miniature Medals	£ 627.03
Sundry Items	£ 438.04
By Printing, Postage & Envelopes re 5 Editions of Northern Light ...	£6135.32
By Committee Meetings travel expenses	£1157.25
<u>By Administration Expenses:-</u>	
Postage	£1187.31
Stationery	£ 529.38
Photocopies	£ 115.56
Repairs to Office Equipment	£ 162.28
Telephone A/cs	£1160.66
By <u>Loss on Reunions:-</u>	
HMS.Nelson 22-5-93 (See Note 6)	£ 260.50
Annual Dinner 23-10-93	£ 33.10
VSC.Lunch 23-3-94 Donation to ACMT	£ 49.14
By <u>Honorariums:-</u>	
R.D.Squires	£ 300.00
P.A.Skinner	£ 300.00
E.W.Rathbone	£ 300.00
L.A.Sullivan	£ 300.00
E.W.Rathbone(1993/94)	£ 150.00
By Purchase of Red and RAF Ensigns...	£ 98.69
By Welfare & Memorial Appeal Fund ...	£1253.66
By Spring Raffle	£ 812.66
By Xmas Gifts to Widows	£ 200.00
By Konika Desk Top Photo Copier	£ 18.50
By <u>Closing Balances at Bank:-</u>	
Current A/c	£ 7121.40
Deposit A/c	£17431.96
	<u>£24553.36</u>
	<u>£42,466.72</u>

NOTE 5. A.C.M.T. 1992/93 A/cs show that £3.00 less was paid to A.C.M.T. than sum received. This short fall has been rectified in this year's accounts.

NOTE 6. Reunion HMS Nelson. Reference to 1992/93 A/cs show receipts for this reunion of £724.50. This reunion thus in fact, made a profit.

NOTE 7. Goodison Park Concert. 1992/93 A/cs show sale of tickets £66.25, purchase of tickets £400.00. This event therefore ended in a loss of £43.75.

NOTE 8. Royal Tournament. Reference to 1992/93 A/cs shows purchase of tickets £390.00. This event was run at cost.

A CHRISTMAS REMEMBERED

WHEN GRACIE SANG 'AVE MARIA'

Having spent wartime winters in the Arctic escorting convoys to Murmansk, H.M. Corvettes POPPY and DIANELLA were suddenly transferred to escort duties in the North Atlantic for the last winter of the war. This theatre of war was entering the last phase of the Battle of the Atlantic having reached its climax over a year earlier.

A few days before Christmas 1944 we entered the snow and ice-bound port of St Johns, Newfoundland, then Britain's oldest colony, now of course, part of Canada, after an Atlantic crossing of gale force ferocity.

The welcoming and picturesque sight of lighted streets and full shops offered our sailors eight flavours of ice cream with lashings of maple syrup, bacon and eggs, 8 ounce steaks ... and NYLONS. They certainly preferred "Newfy-John" as it was affectionately called to poor old Murmansk.

The Canadian Red Cross quickly and generously arranged for as many as possible of the crews of the Royal Naval ships in harbour to be collected after breakfast on Christmas Day and taken to the homes of local families for the day's festivities. The lads turned out in their "Tiddly Best", and a memorable day was spent with new friends which also resulted in the sending of food parcels to their families in rationed Britain from their kind hosts.

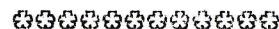
Inevitably, a small number of mostly volunteers had to remain onboard the ships in harbour, and a quiet but by no means dull day was spent, during which all of POPPY's '78s' were played more than once on the messdecks' gramophone : Vera Lynn of course, Bing, Ella, Al Bolley, and Flanagan and Allan singing 'Underneath the Arches'.

Late that night before the return of the revellers, I took a turn on the upper deck to get a breath of the crisp night air. As I looked out over the silent town towards the snow-capped Topsail Hills, the sound of the gramophone floated up a ventilator shaft. It was Gracie Fields singing Ave Maria. My eyes filled with tears as my thoughts drifted homewards to my loved ones in dear old bomb-scarred London.

I have heard that lovely aria sung many times since but never more feelingly than that Christmas night by 'Our Gracie'. When I do I think of 'Newfy-John' and all those good kind folk who took us to their homes and into their hearts that Christmas half a century ago.

Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas
and a Prosperous New Year.

JOHN BEARDMORE
(H.M.S. POPPY)



THE JIM CAMPBELL STORY

INDUNA sailed from Gourock on 3/4 March 1942 for Tail o' the Bank and joined a few ships and then set sail for Iceland.

We sat off Reykjavik, waiting for other ships to arrive from the United States. We were there for about a week with no shore leave, we just sat there night after night watching the lights in the city and wishing we were amongst them, anything just for a break. We took off for points unknown, at that time everything was pure guess work and conjecture. We had only been under way for six or seven hours, when we did an about face, and went back to Reykjavik. We were told that TIRPITZ was on the prowl, hence the about turn.

The information must have been false as we left again the next afternoon. The weather at this time was quite pleasant, but on the second day out we found ourselves in the middle of a mine-field, rumour was that it was 'one of ours'. I think that we were fortunate that the weather was as good as it was, because the mines could be seen quite clearly. Everyone who was not on duty was required on deck for spotting. At this time the Royal Navy escort was still with us and they had marksmen firing away, but with no success that I was aware of.

During the night or early next morning the navy disappeared. We heard that TIRPITZ was again on the move, so to protect the convoy they had headed off to it's projected course.

Later the same day the weather deteriorated, the wind got up, a swell developed, and it became very, very cold during the night, and next morning it was obvious it was going to be a nasty day. To make it even worse we were suddenly attacked by a small force of German bombers, they played havoc with us, sinking at least two ships that I personally saw being hit. (EMPIRE RANGER and RACELAND Editor). I must confess that this to me as a young whipper-snapper was very exciting, actually being in the thick of things. A few hours after the bombers left a lone plane appeared just around the horizon, out of range no doubt, but keeping his HQ up to date with our position.

Our convoy was spread out for some considerable distance, and it was certain that other ships were being sunk by U-boats. We could hear explosions and sometimes see plumes of smoke in the distance. Of course, there were all sorts of theories being espoused by the 'know-it-all's', i.e. U-boat packs waiting behind every large wave, or just over the horizon. In retrospect, I'm sure that most of the talk was to keep their spirits up, except of course the doom and gloom merchants, of which every ship had one or two.

The weather really took a nose-dive, winds gusting hard, rain, and the wave size rapidly increasing. I saw waves of at least thirty to forty feet high. Looking across at the other ships in the vicinity, I saw one - to use the modern idiom - actually surfing, both bow and stern out of the water, propeller just turning and the ship being carried along on top of the wave, then suddenly sliding down the wave, disappearing for a short time, then popping back up again like a cork out of a bottle, and again being carried along on a wave. Mark you, we were not faring very much better.

Everyone at this time or another, were 'feeding the fish', yours truly included. I must admit that this was a very frightening time, no one knew whether or not the next wave would hold us down, or not. The storm raged all day and night and when it finally abated, we were on the edge of the ice-field, together with a couple of other ships, we were told later that the convoy had been scattered all over the ocean.

Whilst the skipper was making arrangements to reverse out, a small trawler - the SILJA - caught up with us. She was to be a present to the Russian government, but unfortunately had run out of fuel. She had ripped up all the ship's furniture and most of its decking to keep going. SILJA had also picked up some survivors from an American ship, the BALLOT, which had been torpedoed. They transferred to our ship by walking across the ice - quite a novel experience.

We reversed out of the ice field and took SILJA in tow. During the night the weather again roughed up, and the tow rope parted. We searched around for some considerable time with no success.

At this time we were approximately 80 miles from Murmansk. Early next morning I was in the saloon, I had prepared things for breakfast, and was just going to sit down when we were struck by a torpedo. I was thrown forward and struck my head on the bulkhead between the pantry and saloon. I must have been knocked out, because the next thing I remember is Jerry Lanning the Chief Steward, telling me to go and get my lifebelt from the pantry. I went for it but someone had beaten me to it. He then sent me to the captain's cabin to get a spare. I went, but unfortunately or fortunately, as the case may be, because someone grabbed me and put me in a lifeboat. Whilst in the boat I saw some of the firemen bringing up from the engine room one of the crew who was badly burned - almost black. Unfortunately, he was dead. The torpedo had struck aft of the engine room and the stern. We were carrying ammunition below decks, and high octane benzine in forty gallon drums on deck.

The exploding torpedo caused a fire which triggered off the ammunition, fortunately, only one lot at a time blew up, or we would have gone for a burton. It was the same with the drums of benzine, they too went off spasmodically. The fire aft of the bridge prevented many of the crew and DEMS ratings from getting to the lifeboats. My lifeboat was lowered into the water, the torpedo had struck during a bad rain squall, the sea was very rough. I was told to grab an oar and use it to prevent the lifeboat being smashed against the ship's side. I did this and was pushing the oar against my stomach to exert more pressure, when I was smacked on the back of my head and told to push from the side - as I did so the lifeboat smashed against the side of the ship and my oar was propelled backwards into the sea.

The person who smacked me was Sam Carpenter the bosun, of the SS BALLOT. This man was extraordinary, to say the least. He took charge of the lifeboat and tried to sort out the survival foodstuffs, they however were frozen solid, the water-oil we were supposed to cover our exposed parts with to prevent frostbite, etc. The pemican, a type of dried meat, was frozen solid, we couldn't dent it with an axe, so we had nothing to eat or drink.

Now, this man Sam Carpenter, sat and rowed for days. If he hadn't kept the boat on an even keel we would not be here today. I honestly don't know where he got the strength or single-mindedness to keep going.

I remember the Second Mate sitting under a blanket or tarpaulin at the stern, he never moved or said anything to anyone that I can remember. I also remember a chap named Noble, a DEMS rating, asking us all to sing hymns and other songs to try and cheer us up, and keep going. I thought he had died in the lifeboat, but I have since learned that he survived. If he is alive now he will be 94 as he was 41 when we were sunk.

It was a very traumatic time for every one in the lifeboat, most of us had never met during the voyage as we all had varying duties to perform in different parts of the ship, and of course there were

survivors of the BALLOT.

I honestly don't think that many in the lifeboat, after the first day actually remember clearly what went on, so intense was the cold. I was told at the time we were sunk that it was 45 degrees below zero, and a maximum life expectancy if you were unfortunate enough to be in the water was 12 minutes.

I was sitting on the port side of the lifeboat facing aft. There was of course the usual cheerful comments being shunted about, i.e. "Gee, could I go a feed of fish and chips, or a steak, or for that matter - anything!" "Boy, could I murder a pint!" I also have a vivid recollection of someone saying he was going to the pub to meet his mates, and then stepped off the lifeboat.

After a couple of days there was a succession of bodies going over the side, as one after another succumbed to the intense cold and to the pressure of the situation we were in.

I must be honest and say that I cannot remember the number of hours or days I spent in the lifeboat. However, I do remember hearing a plane circling above us just before we were picked up by the Russian ship. I was sitting with my left hand on the gunwhale to prevent being thrown all over the place. When I was lifted from the lifeboat, four fingers of my hand stayed attached to the gunwhale, and the thumb was so damaged that I have never been able to bend it. The four fingers of my right hand were all split open to the second knuckle. As a result of this, I have not been able to straighten the second, third or fourth fingers, or bend the first. My right thumb is the only finger undamaged. All five toes of my left foot were so bad that they had to be amputated. My right foot was taken off above the ankle. Later in hospital back in Scotland, it was re-amputated because I had forgotten it was gone! Crazy, eh? It happened so quickly, I was sitting on the edge of a table in a ward kitchen when a nurse called me. Without thinking I jumped down to go to her, landed on my stump bursting it wide open. So I have finished with a stump six inches below the knee.

The last time I remember walking on my own two feet was on the ship that picked us up. I wanted to go to the toilet and someone helped me to get there. Actually, that is the last thing I remember for some time as the next thing I remember was waking up in hospital in Murmansk. I later found out that it was a school which had been converted. It was situated atop of a hill directly above the docks. I have no idea how long I was out, all I can remember was intense pain, and being given injections to deaden the pain. I'm sure that if we had not been given these injections many of us would not be here, or to put it mildly, crazy! (some say we still are!) There were many instances in the hospital, both humorous and sad. We had very little food and the Russian people were in the same situation. However, there were times when we received tins of food from ships which had been fortunate enough to get through. The contents were varied, however we did get a few tins of beans and pork, well, as was the custom they were shared out to everyone.

In the hospital we had two Lascar seamen with broken legs. It appears that during an air raid they jumped over the side to shelter. But they had forgotten that the ship had been unloaded and in consequence was higher out of the water. Anyway, like everyone else they tucked in, and ate everything given to them. Later when it was explained to them that they had eaten pork, hell, you could have heard them screaming, miles away at the front line. You would have thought that we had tried to poison them. Anyway, it caused quite a laugh all

round, not vindictive laughter, just I think momentary escape from boredom and pain.

There were some British Naval Surgeons at the hospital, they were under the command of Lieutenant Commander H.S. Millar, a great guy, nothing was too much trouble for him. He was tremendous in procuring food for us from the ships in the harbour.

He wrote to me a couple of times after I got home, his address was Royal Naval Station, Naval Party 200, c/o G.P.O. London. We also had a very good interpreter, she was a Russian girl named Shura - I think that is the correct spelling. Again, nothing was a trouble to her, a real nice lassie.

One of the bitterest memories of this time was the incessant air raids, they hardly ever stopped, night and day. The bloody Stukas got right above the hospital and started diving towards the docks below, and of course letting their bombs go. Whilst obviously not all their bombs were on target, many fell on the hillside, and on occasions appeared to be coming up the hill towards us. There were no windows left, all had been shattered or broken by blasts, and the openings had been shuttered by old pieces of timber and anything else that was lying around.

The hospital was crowded with survivors and locals who had been injured in the air raids. I would add that there were also some casualties from the front line, which was only about fifteen miles away.

I don't think I can do justice to the events that were taking place at this time, primarily because I was suffering like everyone else. The pain and suffering had to be seen to be believed. I saw grown men leap into the air from the prone position. No one who has not experienced the excruciating pain when the circulation is returning to frostbitten limbs, or for that matter, any part of the body, can under any circumstances, comprehend the mental anguish or terror felt, whilst waiting for the next part of the body to defrost. Screams, moans and groans were all just part of the every day noise. No one took any notice or made any comment to offer sympathy or encouragement.

There was however for a very short time one who was exempt from sympathy or encouragement. He was one of the Lascar seamen already mentioned. He kept on repeating one word over and over again Pain! Pain! Pain! endlessly on and on. So much so that a chap named Ernie Carr a seaman from HMS FORRESTER who had a badly smashed up left arm, warned the Lascar that if he didn't shut up, he would shut him up. I'm sure that Ali didn't understand what Ernie had said, but I know he felt what Ernie meant, because he smacked him on the chin, knocking him cold. Everyone cheered, I would point out it was not vindictive cheering, more the type of 'anything for a laugh to relieve the monotony and pain, than anything else. Similar to the beans and pork episode, unfortunately, poor Ali copped it both times.

There were two events which afforded some pleasure during the three months spent in Murmansk. The first was a movie called The Great Waltz, the music was beautiful as was the scenery and costumes. The second was a concert of music, dancing and singing of a very high standard. Both these interludes were greatly appreciated by everyone. The concert was given by Russian sailors of one of their three fleets - I can't remember which.

During the time spent in Murmansk hospital it became obvious to all who suffered from exposure, that we were very lucky, to be under the care of doctors and nurses who were experts in the handling and treatment of frostbite and exposure cases.

We had been told on a couple of occasions that we would be going home shortly. However there was always an explanation of some sort as to why we would not be going this time. The last being that the liner coming to take us back had been diverted to another theatre of war, or some flight of fantasy story. Never-the-less, we tried to keep in good spirits.

After being in Murmansk for about three months they told us we were going to be moved, but they didn't say where to. Any way the day arrived, and we were prepared and made ready. Towards evening we were moved from our ward downstairs, ready to be put in whatever vehicles we were to be transported in. As usual the air raid sirens sounded and we were told to sit quietly as sound carried a very great distance at night. (That order still puzzles me, how do they expect bomber pilots to hear any noise we made on the ground?), anyway we did sit quiet I think more from fright than any other reason.

A nurse walking past with a tray full of dishes dropped it. You wouldn't believe it, everyone either screamed, cried out, or yelled in sheer terror. Just then the ack-ack guns started banging out, bombs started dropping all over, you would honestly think that the nurse had deliberately set it all going, it was unbelievable. We sat around for some time, then the casualties started to come in from the bombing. The most poignant being two young kids, a girl and a boy, bringing in a woman I took to be their mother. They were supporting her, one under either shoulder, both of her legs appeared to be hanging on by two pieces of skin and were dragging along the ground. Of all the people I saw with severe injuries, this one I remember most vividly.

The all clear eventually sounded and we were put into vehicles and taken to the rail yard where we were put into cattle trucks, fitted with stretchers. After we had travelled for some time. I must admit that it was not the most comfortable mode of travel I had ever experienced - to the contrary. I'm certain the trucks had square wheels, no joking.

Anyway after a few hours, during which time we had only one stop, to empty the slop bucket and take on food and water. I must at this time say the Russian people were really marvellous, they had very little of anything, yet had no hesitation in giving what they had to us. Actually some of the black bread was so hard it was impossible to break it, a bit like survival food in the lifeboats. I am not criticising. No way! These poor people had to try and eat it, hard as it was.

We travelled on for some time more and eventually arrived at a small port (no idea where) and were put aboard a Russian hospital ship, what a change! It was so white and clean, lovely beds or bunks, small cabins holding four persons. After what I had been used to, this was heaven. We still didn't know where we were going, but I don't think we cared. It was so peaceful, no air raids or bombing. We had an escort of several British minesweepers including LEDA, BRAMBLE and SALAMANDER. When we arrived at our destination, Archangel, surprise, surprise - we were greeted by the sound of sirens of course, what else? a bloody air raid! The raids were in no way as frequent as those at Murmansk. However, they were enough to keep your nerves on edge. The weather had shown a marked improvement, we actually had windows we could see through too, a little bit of sunshine, no heavy field artillery firing in the distance. So on the whole we were looking up.

I have just remembered something that happened in Murmansk, it should give you a laugh, although I can tell you it wasn't funny at

the time. After I had been there for nine or ten weeks they thought it would be a good idea to give me a bath, providing I kept my hands and feet out of the water, (they were both heavily bandaged), I was taken down to this big ablution block, stripped and put into this beautiful hot bath, I was lying there with my mind miles away when I became conscious of a lot of giggling, and the nurse talking to someone behind me. She must have been telling them who I was, and why I was there, because the next minute I was surrounded by about twenty naked women. I was only fifteen and had never seen a naked woman. My eyes were popping out of my head, and because of my bandages, I couldn't get them wet, I couldn't cover myself. The girls obviously noticed because there was more laughing and giggling and were talking twenty to the dozen. The nurse said something to them and they all returned to their showers. I was dried and taken back to my ward. The nurse must have told the rest of the staff, because they kept smiling and giving me little waves as they went about their duties. The interpreter Shura, told me that the girls were Red Army girls attached to the Ack-ack batteries around the area. These girls must have been as strong as horses, because when the guns were going off, they sounded like machine guns, they fired so rapidly.

Anyway, back to Archangel. We had been there a few weeks when we were visited by some R.N. top brass, they were accompanied by Godfrey Winn, the author of the book 'PQ-17'. A very nice chap - he sent me an autographed copy of the book. A year before he died, he wrote and told me he was coming to New Zealand, and was looking forward to seeing me again.

With a bit of good weather and fewer air raids we were beginning to feel a bit better in ourselves. I was getting a bit of special attention from a Russian doctor named Onoprienko. He told me I was like his son. I discovered later from the staff, that his son had been killed during an air raid. He would come and sit with me, telling me what was happening in the various theatres of the war. He was a very lonely and sad man. His son had been his only child.

There was great excitement throughout the hospital on the day of the first 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne. Honestly, you would have thought the war had ended, everyone going around with big grins all over their faces. Needless to say, the comments being bandied about were not complimentary to the Germans. I don't think anyone would have had any objections, or would have been sorry if every city in Germany had been subjected to the same treatment. In fact, we were all hoping that it would happen. Revenge is a terrible weapon.

At that time, with the situation we were in, revenge was a motivating factor in keeping us all going. Thank God that time mellows us, or it would be a terrible world to live in - even more so than it is.

Just to make sure I didn't get too comfortable, my appendix started playing up and I was told that it would have to come out. There was a lovely lass named Tanya, I don't know if she had been told by the good doctor to look after me, but look after me she did. When I had to be taken to the theatre to have it removed, she actually carried me down. And when I awoke several hours later, she was still sitting by my bed with a big smile on her face. She was a real tonic to everyone, every time she came into the ward she had a beautiful smile on her face, she was like a breath of fresh air.

Again rumours started going around that we were going home, but as usual, they were just rumours. It was heart-breaking, after the pain subsided a bit we all began to sit up and take notice of what was going on. Unfortunately, nothing. Whilst the staff were very good and

could not do enough for us, we were hardly in a position to do the highland fling, or such like, with feet and hands bandaged there was nothing very much any of us could do!

To add to our enjoyment the air raids started to be a bit more frequent, and sad to say, it got a bit too much for me. I started yelling and screaming so much that they had to sedate me. Now, the surprising thing about this is, this is the first time I have remembered this since then. When I woke from the sedation no one mentioned it, and I had obviously blotted it out. I remember being carried down to the air raid shelter and I was screaming like a banshee! Amazing isn't it, to remember this after all these years?

Well, at last one of the rumours was true. We were made ready to be transported to the other side of the Kola Inlet to Murmansk, as arrangements had been made to ship us home from there. Before leaving, some of the staff came round the wards with gifts. I received a beautiful, four-string mandolin and an embroidered skull cap. As I have said previously, the Russian people were extremely kind hearted.

I was taken from hospital and put aboard the minesweeper SALAMANDER. During the trip my left hand became extremely painful, where the second finger had been the wound was open, and there were a few pieces of broken bone floating around. One of them was hitting a nerve and sending me crazy. Unfortunately there were no facilities onboard to do anything about it - no anaesthetics, etc. The only thing that deadened the pain were the mugs of navy rum. I have to admit, the ship wasn't the only thing floating.

We arrived at Kola Inlet, to be told as usual, that the ship to take us home hadn't arrived, surprise, surprise. We were being transferred to waiting ambulances to take us to hospital. I was actually inside an ambulance ready to move off, when someone shouted for us to stop where we were. They took us from the ambulance and put us aboard an American naval ship which was alongside the wharf.

The ship was the TUSCALOOSA (it was later, the American flag-ship during D-Day). We were told that the captain saw from the bridge what he thought were Russian wounded, we looked like it, as most of us had had our hair removed because it was falling out in handfuls, due no doubt to the scalp being frozen, during our time in the lifeboat. Anyway someone told him who we were and why we were being taken to hospital. He gave instructions to get as many as possible aboard as he was sailing for the U.K. that afternoon.

I can't say how many were loaded, but there were stretchers and bodies (live) in every little space that could be found. I was one of the lucky ones, because I was put in the sick bay. I was still having a lot of pain in my hand, so after an examination by the doctor, he said he would remove the loose pieces of bone. Not long after we sailed, I was taken to the theatre and given an injection of Sodium Pentothal. This drug was the latest on the market (what a difference from the old ether) I remember the doctor telling me to count up to forty, the last number I got to was five. This drug was later used as a truth drug.

I woke later in the day with a painful hand but glad to say a bearable pain. I also noticed some new faces in the sick bay, and was told that they were from the German raider KLUME. Fifty-three had been picked up. I never found out whether or not they had been adrift or if we had sunk their ship.

The officers and crew aboard TUSCALOOSA were a great bunch of guys, almost on a par with the Russians who had looked after us in

both hospitals. The reason I make the distinction, is simple. The Americans had all the latest drugs and equipment, which they gave unstintingly, but the Russians worked miracles with almost nothing.

When we arrived in Scotland, there was a tremendous hype, we were hounded by news media from the ship until we were placed in ambulances and taken to Hairmyers Hospital. Unfortunately, somewhere between the time I left the ship and arrived at the hospital, I lost the mandolin, a pearl handled .45 automatic which had been given to me by an American seaman in Murmansk, and some boxes of Hersheys chocolate bars given to me by the sick bay crew. Welcome Home !!!

THERE ISN'T VERY MUCH MORE I CAN SAY ABOUT THE VOYAGES, SHIPS OR CREWS, OBVIOUSLY THERE IS A LOT MORE? BUT I CAN ONLY SAY WHAT I SAW AND FELT. I REALISE MOST OF THIS IS SELF ORIENTATED, AND SOME OF IT, IN RETROSPECT ABBREVIATED, BECAUSE OF IT.

JIM CAMPBELL.

S.S. EMPIRE GILBERT

SURVIVAL VIA U-586 & ORE CARRIER DAMPFER SPREE BREMENSHE

Courtesy Reg Urwin & North Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand's
 Newsletter No 33.

It wasn't a very big ship the EMPIRE GILBERT, about 7,500 tons. When I first saw her at Tyne Dock, they were still loading cargo and were manouevring a Valentine Tank over No 3 hatch and about to lower it down to join several others that were already on board, along with trucks, A.A. guns and ammunition of different calibres. I understood that all other hatches were loaded in the same fashion, with C.K.D. planes stowed in the tween decks along with cases and drums of aviation fuel and oil. Every spare corner was packed with cases of food, medical supplies and clothing.

When that was all clewed up, they then proceeded to load cases and drums on deck, which also contained planes, spares and yet more fuel. One of the last things they did, was to fit and weld Lewis Gun mounts, 3 aside, from the bridge to the Bofors aft. We already had a vintage 4" Gun mounted aft, along with Oerlikons mounted Port and Starboard on the boat deck. Now some of us had just completed a Gunnery Course, and there was much speculation about our destination. About that time, (the middle of October '42) there was a big operation building up, Black Velvet I think, was the code name - North Africa! We didn't even mention Russia, didn't want to. We thought we were off to the Med., we were dreaming of course!

We set sail on about 20 October '42, (with not a lot of freeboard), once out of the Tyne we turned to Port, and that was a dead give away, although we still had the optimists, who reckoned that there was a big convoy assembling round the West of Scotland at Loch Ewe. Bets were duly placed, and we all went about our business until we finally arrived at Methil. We waited around there for a few late arrivals to join us, then we headed off North, North, ever North. I didn't collect on my bet. The escorts took us up to Reykjavik when

we heard the most awful grinding noises coming, we thought, from about No 2 hatch, it was as black as the proverbial and we couldn't see a thing, someone said "Growlers", but one of the older hands said we were too far South for them yet. By this time everyone was into heavy weather and survival gear, and the conjecture was that we were going to have to try and get below somehow to check the cargo. We signalled the nearest escort to tell him of our plight and our intentions, but we were advised to reduce speed slightly and attend to it in port, we complied, thankfully.

When we were able to get below, we found that one of the tanks had slewed, and was grinding up against its neighbour. We were able to rearrange things and secure everything again, we were damned glad to get back topside and to get into our warm gear again, I can tell you! On the second day in, all the captains were called ashore to a conference, and when they came back aboard, we were all asked to meet in the saloon to be told the outcome our Captain then explained to us that we would proceed to Russia, either Murmansk or Arkøngelsk, if we could get that far, but without escort. We were advised that it was to be a voluntary run, so we were given a while to decide on it.

Now, we had on board several crewmen whose job it was to go to Russia, and help man some under-crewed ships to bring back to the U.K. After some discussion, it was decided that they should go ashore, as it was thought that the risk outweighed the gain, under the circumstances. Once we had everything worked out to our mutual satisfaction, the Captain told us that he had been advised that there would be Rescue Trawlers stationed along the route, but that the risks would be great. He never held anything back, and was very highly thought of by all hands. There were thirteen ships involved in the enterprise, and the scheme was to sail at staggered times, with up to 12 hours between departures.

We were the third ship to get away I think, and on 28 October we pounded our way out of Reykjavik into the coldest and foulest weather I have ever encountered, before or since. There were one or two false alarms, as we thought, so we were all keeping our eyes skinned for the trawlers, but the only ones we saw were Icelandic ones about 6 hours out from port. All hands were on their toes, even the watch below, we had more eyes down and looking than you see in a bingo hall. I would say that there were more than a few Benzadrine tablets consumed, it wasn't going to be our fault if we didn't get there. No one was tired, it was a sleepless ship with loads of hot Kye going the rounds all the time. I don't know if it was the Benzies or the Kye, but there seemed to be a sense of well-being abroad, almost as if "Well, the die is cast, let's get on with it". Almost a fatalistic attitude, I thought. But to get back to the story, it was exactly 2200 hrs, (my oppo had just come back on), when the next alarm came from the Port Wing lookout, "Submarine off the Port beam!" "Hell, that's my side, where is it?" and there in the darkness I could see the even darker shape of a conning tower, about 300ft away and twin torpedo tracks heading, it seemed, straight for me! Before I could even gulp, there were two massive explosions, forrard and amidships. They wouldn't have had a show in the engine room. I dont remember much until I found myself at the foot of the Starboard lifeboat davit, completely unhurt apart from a loud ringing in my ears. (It's been with me ever since). I got to my feet and tried to clear the boat falls, they were frozen solid so I tried to cut them with my knife. I was still hacking away as the ship sank beneath me. Luckily the weather had improved during the last few hours, and it was not quite so rough.

The sudden silence after it was the worst part, trying to come to

terms with what had happened, apart from the odd shout here and there, you would think that we had never been hit. After a short while, someone started singing "The Last All Clear", some of us joined in. I had, by this time, discarded my duffel coat and gloves as they were hampering me somewhat. I can remember trying to clamber onto the corner of a packing case, but without success. It was then that I sensed rather than saw, something looming over me, then I heard voices - German voices. I felt myself being dragged across the saddle tank of the submarine and directed to the conning tower. I could see a dim glow below and at this stage I passed out.

When I came to some time later, I could smell brandy or some such and I was being rubbed rather vigorously by a couple of officers, one of whom turned out to be the Medical Officer who grinned at me and said, "You are very lucky Tommy, for you the war is over". I then lapsed into unconsciousness again, this time into a deep sleep. (So much for Benzies!) Later, when I awoke, I was told that they had two others of the crew on board in the crews mess, who were receiving the same treatment. I must say at this stage, that we were treated very well. The captain told us that he had been a P.O.W. in the U.K. in the last war, and was very understanding of our situation. There was only one exception and he was the Party man on board. The rest of the crew seemed to give him a hard time, so after a time he became quite affable.

The other two survivors were from the Maritime Regiment, responsible for the Bofors Gun down aft. I didn't really know them, as they came aboard just as we sailed. We were asked the usual questions about armament, complement and cargo, etc., in that order, but we couldn't tell them anything, we said, as we had only joined the ship just before she sailed. The crew generally were pretty good, and we ate as they did. There was some feverish activity on two occasions, but nothing came of it. One of the English speaking Germans told us that it was a light ship, and they were not interested, only in loaded ships.

They wanted to hear us sing "The Siegfried Line", but we said only if they sang "Lilli Marlene". One chap gave a very good impersonation of the announcer covering the Joe Louis v Max Schmeling fight, for which he was roundly applauded.

The Party man on board was responsible for propaganda, morale and news releases, but we got the impression that a lot of it was greeted with scepticism. The captain told us that he was very lucky to sink us, as he had been shadowing us for 36 hours and had already fired two torpedoes at us before the hit. He also said it was unlucky for us that the weather had cleared and moderated, otherwise he could well have lost contact with us. We were told that little more than five minutes had elapsed between the time of the strike and our being picked up. The ship went down in under two minutes, with great underwater explosions. It was again at this time that he asked what our cargo was, but I think he knew our answer before he asked the question.

We finished the patrol on U-586 (Class VIIC) after about eight or nine days, and sailed into Narvik, where we were to meet up with a quite different type of German, a lot of whom were barely out of their teens. On our arrival in Narvik, we were handed over to the Wehrmacht, the contrast between the two services was like chalk and cheese. We were duly signed for, taken to a Russian P.O.W. camp where we were strip-searched, taken to the showers, and then we were given old but clean clothing to wear, probably Russian Army stuff, while ours was cleaned. (I don't know why the strip-search, there didn't seem to be a

lot of trust between the two services). Shortly afterwards, a German guard arrived with two Russian P.O.Ws. in tow, carrying our cleaned and pressed clothing, (we never saw our leather jerkins again, probably commandeered for the Russian Front). They put us in to a round type wooden hut without windows, but with two doors and a gravel floor, half of the floor area was raised about a foot with a wooden platform on which we were meant to sleep. The two prisoners were detailed off to be our servants, and the guard insisted that they were to do everything that we required of them. We didn't insist of course, but they were responsible for the firewood and the collection of our meals. Fish raw, fish boiled, fish soup, you name it any way you like.

There was a fairly large contingent of Russians there and the Germans treated them as little more than animals, they went to great lengths to explain why they regarded them as sub-human - probably more propaganda. But the word soon got around that we were there, and during our exercise periods, we could see the poor wretches pulling great sledges of firewood and being encouraged, most vociferously, by the German guards. When the Russians saw us, they would sometimes surreptitiously make the V sign. I think the repercussions could have been fatal for them, had they been caught.

After a couple of weeks, we were taken out of the camp and placed aboard a small ore carrier, the DAMPFER SPREE BREMENSHE, of about 2,000 tons and loaded to the gunwales with pig iron. She sailed almost immediately, and dodged all the way down the Norwegian coast between the Islands and the Mainland. We stopped off at Kristiansand, Stavanger and holed up in Kristiansand until the time was right to make a mad dash across the Skaggerak. All this time we had been locked in a small cabin under the bridge. As we left the captain came down, along with another chap in uniform to let us out and said that if we did anything to endanger the ship, he would shoot us, he then went on to say that he wanted us to have as much chance as the rest of the crew should the ship be sunk. "It is a very dangerous trip" he said, "and we must be silent". I don't know what he meant by that, his English wasn't that good and he was very nervous. He looked to be about 60-odd and should have been at home playing with his grandchildren. Everyone was in life jackets, even us and the cook in the galley, we were suddenly at the mercy of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

It was with very mixed feelings that we made that mad dash across the strait to Kiel, at a magnificent 7 knots! We had a very nervous but uneventful trip, it would have been just too ironic, had we not have done. No pun intended. When we arrived at Kiel, we were unceremoniously bundled ashore, just as we were, we had no luggage to worry about. We were then made to get into a truck, under guard, and driven across country to Wilhelmshaven, where the real business of interrogation began. We were allotted what appeared to be a dormitory in an upstairs building. We asked for food and reading and writing material, as it was now about the middle of January '43 and no-one knew where we were or what had happened. We were refused writing material until after the interrogation, but they did give us reading material - an English version of Hitler's Mein Kampf! We didn't do very well in the food stakes either, although under the circumstances, we did as well as could be expected. Someone said the coffee was made from burnt ground acorns and chestnuts, the bread was very dark and rough. The only thing I recognised was the potatoes, of which we got two, and a bowl of watery soup, we couldn't decide what the main ingredient in it was, but it went down well, as it was the

first meal we'd had in a day and a half. We were fed every twelve hours while we were there, at 0600 and 1800, whether we needed it or not.

We only had a few days there, as we were unable to volunteer(?) any information. There were threats, cajolements, and offers of English cigarettes, some of which we managed to get without compromising anyone. We asked again about being able to write to our families, and were told that it would be arranged through the Red Cross. The interpreter then told us that it was just as bad for the German soldiers to get letters to their families from the Russian Front. I think it was his way of telling us to stop our moaning.

The questions during the interrogation were, "How many ships?", "What cargo and complement?", and "What ports did we assemble at?" They were also very interested to know if, while we were in Reykjavik, there was any air activity. No one had mentioned Reykjavik at any stage of the proceedings, we couldn't tell him anyhow, we weren't there and we never saw any. They also were very interested in what sort of armament we carried. I think they finally gave us up as a bad job, either that or they thought we were bigger liars than Tom Pepper. We were then cleared to be admitted to a regular P.O.W. camp.

Once again we were loaded on to a truck with a lot of German Naval Personnel, some of which turned out to be guards at Marlag und Milag Nord, the camp to which we were headed. This camp was located between Hamburg and Bremen, which was ideally situated during the 1,000 bomber raids - great for morale! It held about 4,000 men in all, it was split into several sections, each with its own barracks, there were R.N., R.M., D.E.M.S., Maritime Regt., and mostly M.N.

We were taken to reception and booked in, given a number, taken to the Red Cross Office and there, issued with underwear and khaki pants, battledress, boots, etc. Then we went to our respective camps and barracks. We were firmly entrenched as a guest of Herr Hitler for the duration, but not too firmly!

As a sequel to this part of the story, my mother had been advised that I, along with the rest of the ships company, was 'missing, presumed drowned, through enemy action'. She didn't learn of my survival until early March. WELL AFTER MY MEMORIAL SERVICE.

oooooooooooooooooooo

A SURVIVOR'S ODYSSEY

BY WINTHROP A. HASKELL

When on 7 December 1941, war shattered the peaceful rounds of the U.S. coastal coal trade, it was not a question of if, but when the U-boats would arrive. However, nothing was altered aside from painting over the ports and swinging out the boats. We continued to run with all navigation lights burning and all aids in full operation. Brilliantly lit coastal cities were visible 50 miles out to sea, neatly silhouetting ship traffic and welcoming the "Kreigsmarine" to their second "Happy Time".

Although British intelligence warned Washington U-boats were en route, the 1918 precedent history repeated itself with a vengeance. Nothing was done to protect coastal shipping and the debacle that followed dwarfed the better publicised Pearl Harbour disaster and cut the heart out of the American merchantile marine. Some 400 ships, half of them tankers, and nearly 5000 experienced

officers and men lost their lives on unarmed, unescorted ships. Blazing tankers, vast oil slicks, drifting wreckage, masts, funnels and grounded wrecks marked our coastal passage until I resolved to ship foreign. At least the vessel would be in an escorted convoy affording some protection. Our bosun, torpedoed in a British ship in an earlier war advised "Stay on the coast, lad, its never far to shore", but weary and apprehensive of the shooting gallery scenario I signed off and on to the first outward bounder, the ship's articles reading "To one or more ports in Russia or where ever else in the world the Master may direct". We were probably the last vessel to leave a U.S. port with the destination identified. From frying pan to fire in one jump! The innocence of youth!

She proved to be the S/S ALCOA CADET, 4823x387x53x27, built Arlington, New York in 1919, rusty and decrepit beyond description, loaded with crated lorries, 16 tanks in the holds and on deck, sheet steel, crated food, 100 tons of ammunition and 200 tons of TNT. She had carried bauxite ore for many years between Trinidad and Montreal with little or no maintenance. The only wartime concession was a concrete overcoat on the pilot house and a coat of grey paint. Visibility from the pilot house was so severely restricted it made it necessary for the watch to remain on the flying bridge exposed to the elements. Lovely advanced shore-side planning!

We sailed alone and unarmed for Halifax at 1100 on 16 March 1942, amid the U-boat's "Operation Drumbeat". Surprisingly we arrived unscathed two days later. On 30 March we joined an Iceland bound convoy, still unarmed, arriving there 14 April. Four days later the trawler OLAF presented us with a gift of 5 antique .30 calibre Lewis guns with a princely offering of 500 rounds of ammunition. Somehow, the engineers managed to mount our "defensive" armament around the bridge and we taught ourselves how to load and fire. No degaussing, no steel helmets, gas masks, red lights for lifejackets or other warlike implements were wasted on the expendable rust pile.

We departed Iceland in PQ15 on 26 April arriving Murmansk 5 May, losing three ships to air attack en route and had to broach the cargo for more ammunition. I did not note the Luftwaffe pilots flinch from our defensive fire!

The second from last ship to discharge we were left behind by QP12 swinging on the Hook off Mishukou Point Signal Station and were singled out for repeated devoted attention by Luftwaffe pilots who seemed frustrated they had missed us in convoy. Repeated attacks with numerous near misses severely damaged hull and engine as we were subjected to the rapt attention of pilots with bombs to spare.

Meanwhile, fresh water and food was severely rationed as stores ran out. Our uneasiness was enhanced when the S/S STEEL WORKER fell victim to a mine close aboard us and 12 of her survivors joined us. The wrecks surrounding us included the Polish TOBRUCK beached just astern did little to allay our own misgivings and the Russians had nothing to spare for us understandably.

Sunday, 21 June 1942, the longest day of the year was gloomy and overcast. At 1505, sitting in the crew mess with a cuppa, suddenly I was catapulted into the overhead. Lights shattered, the big coffee urn behind me split, spewing coffee and steam everywhere, the room filled with smoke and dust. When I came to, I found myself standing up facing the opposite direction from where I had been seated. and my mate had vanished. Amid the smoke I found him under the wreckage of a table where he had been driven in exactly the opposite direction. Pulling him from the chaos, we stepped out on deck directly above No 4 hatch which no longer existed. There was just a great gaping hole into

which water was pouring. Steel deck plates were peeled back sardine tin style, mainmast a stump at the table, hatch beams, rigging and wire in a huge tangle everywhere. We had been sitting as nearly directly over the explosion - 3 or 4 feet - as possible. The main topmast had smashed the port boat when it came down and wooden cargo booms drifted past outboard amid the growing carpet of fuel oil.

Oddly, the starboard boat, already swung out, had been blown out of the gripes and davits landing alongside, still fast to the ship by the sea painter and the crew were already swarming down the lifelines as the ship was going down fast. I took one look at the cold water before taking a lifeline, but kicked off my heavy seaboots as I could visualise them as a pair of water filled anchors should I fall into the icy Kola Inlet. Luckily I did not but was handicapped ashore in socked feet until some kindly soul donated a much used pair of oversize hobnailed boots.

The ship sank rapidly, her back completely broken, the bow rising vertically, pulling up her slack anchor chain. All the officers had to abandon forward on to the single life raft and the Master burned his hands almost to the bone sliding down the painter as he was unable to check his fall.

The fireman on watch in the engine room was never seen again, probably killed instantly. Everyone suffered injuries, some quite serious, but fortunately both Russian and British small craft were quickly on the scene. As the overloaded lifeboat and raft were emptied the survivors were conveyed ashore. All hands were run through a "medical examination" conducted by a female doctor (at least she had on a once white coat) and if you were not bleeding profusely or sporting a stump you were understandably summarily dismissed.

Meanwhile, the forward section of the ship rolled over on her port side and sank in 23 metres of water. She rests there to this day with a wreck buoy to mark her grave and our shipmate within. A Russian tug pushed the stern section, remaining afloat, up on to the beach where the crew busily salvaged everything moveable.

The explosion had been caused by an air-dropped mine which went off directly under No 4 hatch at the engine room bulkhead. The old ship literally blew apart. Decks had already rusted through in several places.

That evening we were conveyed to the survivors camp south of the city on the west bank of the inlet. Before leaving, whilst awaiting transport, we found a large heap of badly damaged Russian Army equipment piled on the beach. It was at high-water line at the end of what appeared to be a road. A large number of steel helmets, evident all with holes visible, obviously battlefield salvage, but head protection was paramount amid the constant shower of red-hot anti-aircraft steel shrapnel fragments, so I eagerly seized one only to drop it hastily as equally hot, as a Russian sentry stepped out of the bushes and unlimbered his rifle.

The survivor's camp was crowded with all colours and nationalities, food scarce, consisting mainly of watery soup and an unlimited supply of Spillers Sea Biscuits which were so hard they not only tested the teeth, but patience spurred by hunger pangs. Washing facilities were a nearby icy spring-fed brook and next morning while attempting daily ablutions we were overflowed by a Russian Hurricane at zero feet pursued by an Me.109, machine guns rattling, blotting out the sky with yellow wing tips and black crosses. The OCEAN VOICE, sporting a huge bomb hole in her focsle and anchored just off shore opened fire with everything that would bear, whereupon Jerry flipped

a wing tip and departed for Finland while the smoking Russian crashed into the inlet not far from the grave of our old ship.

Murmansk was being heavily bombed and survivors were instructed to remain under cover when enemy planes were overhead for fear of attracting undue Luftwaffe attention. Showers of incendiaries were regularly dumped on the city and a strong breeze enhanced the raging fires consumed everything flamable. It has been reported that the tonnage of bombs dropped on Murmansk was only exceeded by that at the Battle of Stalingrad. Later when we were taken to join the ships of QP13 for repatriation the city resembled a huge cemetery with the chimneys, all that remained of the wooden buildings, standing stark and white like tombstones. A number of aircraft and parachutes were observed coming down each day during the almost constant air battles overhead, but alas all were identifiable as Russian.

After about a week survivors were distributed among the parting ships and I was placed aboard the Hog Island built AMERICAN PRESS, much better armed, stored and maintained than the wreck we left at the bottom of the Kola Inlet. It was then I discovered to my dismay that hobnailed boots and smooth steel decks were akin to ice skates, with even less control. Although our pay ceased the day the vessel was lost, the bombs, shells and bullets did not end with our pay, and we were required to work our passage also without pay. HMS GOSSAMER was bombed and sunk nearby on this date with heavy loss of life. Not superstitious, of course, but I am glad I did not know the convoy number at that time!

Shortly after clearing the Murman coast we were picked up by shadowing enemy aircraft, no doubt reported and a number of depth charge attacks by the escorts indicated that U-boats were attempting to get at the convoy. However, generally prevailing thick weather and enemy concentration on north-bound PQ17, spared us any direct attacks. By 5 July, the weather had deteriorated even more with a rough sea, gale winds and rain after passing numerous icebergs that required drastic course alterations to avoid.

At about 2100 one of the crew on watch burst into the quarters with the shout "Get 'em on lads, they got one already". When I reached the deck HMS NIGER was just going under on our starboard beam, a personal tragedy as she had been our chummy ship during our prolonged stay in Murmansk. Looking aft, the Liberty JOHN RANDOLPH, swinging wildly and out of control missed our stern by a coat of paint before blowing up in a flash and a shower of debris then vanishing in the murk and rain. The Master cracked on full ahead and followed by the HEGIRA abeam, made all speed away from the scene of carnage. We lost sight of HEGIRA in the poor visibility and ran alone through the short night, arriving at 0300 off Akureyri in North Iceland, where we were met by DOROTH GRAY, a very welcome sight as we had no charts of the coast and U-boat transmissions were picked up close aboard by our Sparks.

We found that HEGIRA had beaten us into safety by several hours! All were convinced that we had been under surface attack some claiming to have seen gun flashes and indeed I saw one enormous explosion and resultant water spout between the columns of ships, so it is difficult even today to accept the official version of a "friendly" minefield, as mines generally do not detonate unaided.

From Akureryi, the two refugees from unlucky QP13 were escorted round to Reykjavik on 8 July, where we arrived at 1845 on 10 July, departing in a west-bound convoy four days later and arriving New York on 2 August 1942, with only the clothes we stood up in remaining. A predictable end to a Survivor's Odyssey!!

AFTER "EDINBURGH"

By John A.P. Kenny, B.Sc.

John has produce a very good 'epistle' entitled "SURVIVAL IN A SAVAGE SEA". This would require at least 20 pages of Northern Light, consequently we have been forced to reduce it. The story of the heroic battle to save the cruiser, will follow in a later edition. This article commences at the Abandon Ship order. (Editor).

The third torpedo was decisive. EDINBURGH's list was increasing and by 0749 it had increased to 17 degrees. "A" Boiler Room gradually flooded and steam failed. The battle was still on but water was being shipped and the order "Abandon Ship" was given (I was still below in the Central Communication Office whilst this was going on). The Germans were very much preoccupied with their SCHOEMANN survivors when HUSSAR laid a smoke screen and GOSSAMER came alongside on the Star-board side and HARRIER on the Port side. Now, to fully appreciate the problem you have to realise that the minesweepers were only 815 tons and very small at 230ft x 33½ft x 7½ft draught. 45+ wounded, mainly stretcher cases, and over 800 EDINBURGH crew trying to join them, and they already had a ship's company of 80+.

When I got on deck evacuation was already in full swing. EDINBURGH had sunk to the extent that her deck was almost level with the decks of the minesweepers. Priority was given to getting the wounded away first and there were some tense moments when stretcher cases were being passed over and the ships started drifting apart. Fortunately, in all cases they came back together again in time and all wounded were got off safely. There was no panic at all and everyone lined up in an orderly way along the rails and as space occurred you took your turn, jumped and men on the minesweepers helped you aboard. An incredible 440 (including me) jumped on GOSSAMER which also had her quota of wounded. 350 plus the wounded and the Admiral and Captain got on to HARRIER. The bomb room with the gold had been flooded on the Thursday and I don't think anyone gave it any thought now.

On boarding the minesweepers most went below and were told not to move about to maintain stability. I stayed on deck and as EDINBURGH appeared not to be sinking further some thought was given to re-boarding her - frankly, I was glad when it was decided that it was impracticable. Shell fire and twenty-four depth charges set to explode against or near her side, had no apparent effect on her and FORESIGHT had only one torpedo left. It was fired and there was consternation when after the timed run there was no explosion, it turned to relief when finally it did - the cold water had slowed it down. EDINBURGH, a thoroughbred to the last, sank gracefully stern first in three minutes. We now all went below, had stiff tots of rum and thankfully were not attacked by submarines or aircraft as at about 9 or 10 knots we headed back to the Kola.

Tired and cold, with reaction setting in we arrived at the Kola just after 0100 on Sunday 3 May and all disembarked at Polyarnoe. Lined up on the long quay, the ship's roll call was made and for the first time we knew who had died or were injured. The Captain thanked everyone for what they had done and was optimistic about an early return home. It was the last time we were all together as a number were detailed off to be housed at Polyarnoe, the wounded were to be hospitalised at Murmansk, and the bulk, at least 500 or more embarked for Vaenga. There was a snow blizzard when we arrived at Vaenga Jetty at about 0200 and we straggled in a long group two miles up the hill to

the encampment and village. The frozen snow and ice either side of the track was shoulder high and the blanket I had saved proved to be a godsend. We arrived at the village which had been a base for fishing and timber pre-war and which now primarily was a short leave and break for Russian servicemen from the front - from where we were a mere 17 miles away. It was picturesque, wooden houses and the whole area well wooded. The House of Culture dominated the social activities, it served as a cinema and our films were much appreciated by the Russians. Gruesome exhibitions of Nazi atrocities filled part of the premises but dances were held almost nightly, which we attended, usually to tango or waltz. Street loudspeakers broadcast daily non-stop rallying propaganda or martial music.

A huge wooden barracks building, vacated earlier that day by Russian soldiers, was allocated to us. With two huge rooms without heating, with smaller rooms off, we were allocated a bunk from the long rows of double tiered wooden bunks and given a straw filled mattress, a rough blanket and a pillow. Then we went to the communal feeding hall for our first hot meal for three days, a huge wooden bowl of venison soup, black bread and boiled grain, and raisin or pine needle tea. For the first week this was our menu but soon things were organised and we had corned beef, jam and huge tins of dried ships biscuits which one could gnaw away at, if hungry. In retrospect, I don't think I have ever been so healthy since as I was then, through this basic diet. There were no toilets, the Russians at that time using the open, snow-bound ground and when the thaw came it was appalling. That first night we were told there was a curfew until 0600 with the risk of being shot, as earlier in the war in the dark hours, raiders had infiltrated the area. Fortunately I slept soundly so I don't know if anyone with a toilet problem risked it. When we woke about 0800 it was snowing heavily and we found ourselves on the top of a hill with hills on either side, the sea two miles behind us, and in front of us in the valley below, a large aerodrome. That day I was issued with a Russian sailor's jersey and uniform and shortly afterwards, a sheepskin lined top coat from one of our ships, so I could start going out.

With hundreds of men with time on their hands immediate steps were taken to maintain discipline and morale. At the bottom of the hill a large trench was dug and the ship's carpenters using timber, made effective toilets. Precarious but serviceable. Ship's canvas provided privacy and shelter from the elements. A number of people had dysentery type stomach disorders, and there were numerous crises in the early morning, when it was found that the Russians had taken all the toilet rolls to make paper bags to put in a type of tobacco seed to smoke. I found the Russians very friendly, they themselves were suffering tremendous privation and were sharing what little they had, and the constraints that I had found earlier in Archangel and in post-war visits to the U.S.S.R., did not seem to apply. The girls, many of them well educated in Moscow, were good linguists and friendly and very interested in the west. Relationships, though warm, tended to be platonic as our own people warned us of the dire consequences that were likely to follow if the authorities learnt of sexual activity. We had steam baths in the communal bath-house once a week and soon lost our shyness when on occasion we had to share it with the Russian girl 'soldiers'. An area was cleared for football, when usually the Russians won, cricket bats were made and later races in the cutters of the escorts were held in the bay. It seemed silly to me at the time but we were organised into formations for drill and physical exercise, and for guard drill even dummy rifles were made.

As men were drafted home increasingly we were left to our own devices. We feared very much being wounded by bombing as grim stories had filtered back from Murmansk where EDINBURGH's doctors were working in the hospital. Crowded bed to bed, with six tables in the operating theatre and medical supplies minimal. Money from the escort ships and an auction of personal items we had saved was held and a large amount of money raised for the dependants of those killed. Housey, Housey, (now called Bingo) filled in the time when we were snowbound, and inevitably card gambling schools. We were uneasy when we were told a liner, LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE, was coming up to take us home - we were sure it would be sunk, and we were glad when it was turned back. Some of us started to ski - the Russians helping us.

Excitement rose when we heard that the repaired cruiser TRINIDAD would soon be leaving with escort at high speed for U.K. with survivors as passengers, and the first of many 'draws' to decide who should go home were held. Rightly, priority was given to the wounded, but to my then disappointment my name was not selected.

We said goodbye to our friends and saw them leave on 13 May, on TRINIDAD, with destroyers FORESIGHT, FORESTER, MATCHLESS and SOMALI for a high speed journey home.....(the TRINIDAD's last days followed. Editor).....At dawn all were taken off and MATCHLESS sank her with a torpedo. Of those killed, 10 were EDINBURGH, some TRINIDAD and others, merchant seamen. The wounded were from all three categories. Some of the merchant seamen had survived their own sinking, the EDINBURGH sinking, hospitalisation in Murmansk and now this sinking.

The blizzards continued until early June and then the rain and thaw cleared the snow. Like a theatre scenery transformation, greenery and flowers blossomed and dry, sunny and later hot days, with clear blue skies became the norm, with twilight becoming minimal. With the better weather German air activity increased and the intensity of the bombing was stepped up, now going well into the evening. A Russian bugler sounded the air raid alarm - an urgent musical pattern - and we took cover in the woods or nearby trenches. But the raids normally were made on the ships in Vaenga Bay, or the nearby aerodrome. I often went on the hills to watch the aerial dog-fights, and one morning a Russian fighter crashed near me and a companion. We ran to help but suddenly heard shots and realised a Russian soldier was shooting near us to warn us off. We quickly withdrew.

Raids were now regular on Murmansk, often more or less non-stop, as the German aerodromes were so near the same pilots could make many sorties a day. But a pattern emerged when it was safest to visit Murmansk (usually, at what presumably were German meal times) and my English speaking Russian girl friend wrote, in Russian, explanatory details about me, to show to Russian soldiers, etc. when travelling around. By this time I had got to know a number of the Vaenga people, for example, I used the local barber, and I started hitch hiking around the area. Using cigarettes as currency, I used to get past the military checkpoint at Vaenga, hitch the 20 miles to Murmansk, and then haggle with the dockyard sentries to enter, to board the allied ships to ask for a meal and cigarettes. The American ships were very generous. I went a number of times and always planned to be in and out during the lull in the raids. On board the American SS MICHIGAN I was much delayed through meeting an English seaman serving aboard, when a violent raid started with MICHIGAN the main target. I quickly left and as bombs were falling quite near, I sheltered under a nearby train - I afterwards found out that it was packed with ammunition just

unloaded from MICHIGAN. Raids had been heavy that day and a hospital had been hit. When I first visited Murmansk it was more or less intact, the bombing having concentrated on the dock area, and the buildings were predominantly made of wood. Whilst visiting on 18 June as I got closer I could see a large pall of smoke, the wind direction had been right, and incendiary bombs had been dropped to fire the town. About a third of the town was burning, it was awesome, and a subsequent mass raid about a week later added to the devastation and fired the docks. When I visited later, and for the last time, saw the Arctic Hotel had gone and part of the town, the Northern part, was a forest of black chimneys jutting up from the burned buildings. Strangely enough our camp at Vaenga was never directly bombed, but we rejected the idea that it was chivalry for us survivors, but thought instead perhaps the Germans thought we were German P.O.W's - we looked very rough. My days were helped when I met a school friend, and a friend from training days who were on some of the escort ships. They gave me meals, supplies and newspapers.

Our camp was solely for R.N. survivors, merchant seamen survivors being housed across the inlet from Murmansk, so as June progressed our numbers gradually reduced as individual ships took men home, and hopes rose that we would all leave on the next convoy, QP13. This was to be a large convoy of 36 freighters with ultimately 14 escorts, and a number of draws to select names were made as the various ships said how many they could take. My name was not drawn and finally 60 of us were told that we would have to stay behind. NIGER had spent eight months at Kola instead of the intended six, and it was decided that she could return with the convoy and take the last 60. The day arrived for the 60 of us to report at Vaenga Jetty at 0800 to board NIGER at 0900. At the jetty our hopes were dashed - there was room for only 40, and 20 of us would have to stay behind. Names were again drawn and I was one of the 20 to stay behind. For the first time I was really depressed as my friends said goodbye, gave me their chocolate and books and embarked on NIGER.....on her final and tragic voyage..... All my friends died and the tragedy occurred on 5 July - my 20th birthday.

My mind was taken off the disappointment as a friend of mine who could speak fluent Russian and I were moved to the quarters now used by British officers, he to interpret and both of us to cook for them and generally keep the place clean. Previously used by Russian officers it represented luxury. Comfortable beds, toilets, etc. GOSSAMER, on which I had clambered when leaving EDINBURGH, itself was sunk in the Kola Inlet and soon its C.O.Lieut. Cmdr. Tom Crease and other officers joined our establishment. I obtained better food from the Russian cook serving the Russian officers next door as he had a weakness for gin, and we had plenty of that. Neither of us could cook but it could not have been too bad as Rear Admiral Bevan (SBNO) whenever he dined with our officers always asked for a second helping. But these lighter moments were overshadowed by our closely watching the PQ17 debacle unfold, and the subsequent loss of NIGER. On my birthday, when I should have been killed on NIGER, was spent swimming and fishing in a nearby lake with a concert at night but the bombing was getting increasingly heavier. The SBNO and others were convinced that our R.N. camp would soon be singled out and plans were made for us to go by rail to Archangel. The trains and track were under constant air attack as it formed the main route to Moscow and we were pleased when the idea was dropped.

Instead we left Vaenga on the freighter HARMATRIS a ship of 5395 tons which had been torpedoed twice in January. With huge holes in her

side, patched up literally with wood with a metal covering she was now going for extra work to be done in Archangel. With a 4" gun and 8 smaller A.A. guns and without escort she expected to do the voyage at 5 knots in 4 days. So, on 21 July, the last 20 EDINBURGH survivors and others boarded her and we sailed at night in the hope that despite the midnight sun we would not be spotted by aircraft which monitored the Kola entrance. The second day we were spotted and as the weather was clear we feared the worst. Crucially we sailed into fog which blanketed us, thankfully too, over mast height, and we heard the aircraft overhead looking for us, but the sky did not clear again until we were well within the White Sea.

In sunny weather we arrived in Archangel on 24 July and first were housed in the Naval Training School at Solombula (which I revisited in 1991) and then in a school across the river. After Vaenga and Murmansk, Archangel was idyllic, only sporadic air raids and the war seemed a long way away. The city had some tree lined streets and remains of stately palaces and onion domed churches and an Opera House. To me it seemed to be a mixture, with some modern buildings but mainly wooden houses, with board walk pavements and there was a tram service. It was a low point for Russia at that time and everyone seemed careworn, underfed, poorly dressed and in the main old - most of the young people away fighting. The ordinary people were friendly when on their own but constrained otherwise, and unlike Murmansk, the soldiers, sentries and officials were unbending. Packed full of PQ17 survivors, many of the 1,300 brought to the Kola were here, there was plenty going on, with the International Club (of palace like proportions a centre for dancing, concerts, general socialising and a restaurant. Dance hostesses were in attendance, but often appeared to be doing their duty rather than enjoying it. To get across the wide river to Archangel I had to jump and walk over hundreds of logs, closely packed, floating down the river. I occasionally went to the Russian Orthodox Services, and generally enjoyed four weeks in Archangel.

As August progressed the task of housing and feeding the large number of survivors, many of them American, at Archangel and Murmansk had reached crisis proportions, and in Archangel most of the public buildings had been taken over to house them. With winter looming up at the possibility of more survivors from the next convoys, it was decided to make a special effort to get a lot home on escorts straight away, and the remainder of the escorts of the next returning convoy. On 13 August TUSCALOOSA with escorts left U.K. for Murmansk to provide for the wounded there a British medical unit and supplies, and personnel with supplies to facilitate R.A.F. bombing operations, utilising Kola bases, against German surface ships. British ships were to bring survivors from Archangel, all meet up outside the Kola, then sail up to Vaenga where TUSCALOOSA would be unloaded, and survivors from Archangel plus those at Murmansk would be allocated amongst the home-going ships. To avoid risk to TUSCALOOSA the whole operation to be completed overnight with an early morning departure.

I, and most of the other EDINBURGH survivors who had missed passage on the ill-fated NIGER left Archangel on the fleet destroyer, MARNE, together with other destroyers and minesweepers packed with survivors. As a Coder I was allocated to work in the wireless office for the voyage to U.K. At Vaenga the R.A.F. personnel and stores were landed from TUSCALOOSA. The Russians accepted the medical supplies but refused to let the medical unit land, and the survivors were allocated and transferred to the various ships. We sailed as planned

at about 0600 on 24 August at high speed, but very soon hit rough weather. We did not mind - we would soon be out of the danger zone! I still had my blanket from EDINBURGH, but someone on MARNE presumably had a better use for it and it vanished.

(During the voyage home, MARNE, MARTIN and ONSLAUGHT were detached towards the Norwegian coast to intercept and destroy the German minelayer ULM). Down below in MARNE the gunfire immediately above our heads was deafening and for the first time, throughout the whole of my Russian experience, I felt real fear, which lasted for about 5 minutes. I was not aware, because of the noise of the guns, but MARNE had been hit on the stern, knocking out "Y" Gun on the stern and damaging the depth charges, which Thank God, did not explode. Soon after, I came up on deck and found that the EDINBURGH and MARNE personnel who had been on the stern had, in the main, been blown to pieces. We had to make token bodies for burial at sea. ONSLAUGHT finished off ULM with torpedoes, then kept anti-submarine patrol whilst MARNE and MARTIN commenced recovering ULM survivors - 2 officers and 57 men. Then after reports of enemy aircraft the three destroyers beat a hasty retreat - I stood near the stern, helplessly looking at 30 or more Germans struggling in the water with utter despair on their faces as we gathered speed and prayed fervently for them.

I enjoyed a taste of destroyer life on the voyage home, the sea was very rough but the rest of the journey was uneventful, and when we arrived at Scapa appreciated the special greeting given to us survivors by Rear Admiral Burnett.

Then home to two weeks survivors leave.

+++++

ALL THEY HAD FOR NORWAY

By Ian A Millar, Trident Archives U.S.A.

Wars bring out the best and the worst in mankind. At times the heroism of some is recorded in the news of the day or in official dispatches. It is often the case that because no one was watching or because a particular deed took place far from the view of press or cameras nothing was ever mentioned of any note. When fifty or so years pass by, then the obvious and traditional versions of the history and the well known acts of heroism have been repeated so many times that historians start searching for facts that have never seen the light of day. The dark side of this of course are the discoveries that history has not always been set down based on fact, while the bright side is that some who sacrificed for others are discovered and their story told. It is often the case that many if not most of those who participated are gone but that should not decrease by one iota the need to bring the experience to light.

SS HENRY BACON was not unlike the many hundreds of other Liberty ships built during the war. She carried a crew of 41 merchant seamen and 26 Naval gunners and had already one successful voyage to North Russia under her belt. Having just completed a second passage to North Russia in Convoy JW63 she was on her way back in Convoy RA64 when things were to be very different.

Sometime previous to the sailing of Convoy RA64 the entire population of the Norwegian island of Sjørøy had to be evacuated in the face of advancing German forces. This was accomplished by the

courageous efforts of the crews of the destroyers SIOUX, ZEST, ZAMBESI and ZEALOUS who sailed into the area behind the German lines to bring the population of some 500 people out. With the refugees aboard the destroyers returned to Murmansk where they put the Norwegians ashore. It was decided that the Norwegians from Sørøy would be placed aboard the Merchant ships in the next convoy back to Scotland and this was done.

On 17 February convoy RA64 sailed from the Kola Inlet, consisting of 26 American, 6 British and one Norwegian merchant ships. The lone Norwegian ship was IDEFJORD. The 500 refugees from Sørøy were divided up between the ships and 19 of them were allocated to HENRY BACON. The convoy cleared the inlet but just outside the Germans were waiting and THOMAS SCOTT was torpedoed and sunk by U-968. Good fortune prevailed and all aboard the ship were saved including the 40 Norwegian refugees. Later the results would not be so happy as the Germans torpedoed and sank LARK and BLUEBELL. Only one man survived from the latter.

As if the presence of the Germans was not enough the convoy was to be hit with the worst storm in the area during the war, which is still remembered as The Great Gale. The foul weather caused the convoy to scatter over a large area many of the ships sustaining major damage. In time most of the ships were brought back into formation of sorts when the Luftwaffe launched an attack on the convoy. In spite of the terrible weather on the 20 February some Wildcat fighters were launched from one of the escort carriers NAIRANA, and combined with the intense anti-aircraft fire of the escorts drove off the determined enemy. Again the weather caused the convoy to scatter and again reassembly was effected and this time the Germans did not find the convoy.

During the heavy weather HENRY BACON had suffered severe damage to her steering gear and rudder and straggled from the rest of the convoy. It was on the afternoon of February 23 when a squadron of 23 German torpedo planes found the all but helpless HENRY BACON as they were searching for the main convoy. It was to be an afternoon that none who survived would forget and it would be one of those gallant episodes in a long war that was quickly forgotten.

The late Robert Tatosky, then an 18 year old messman remembered the arrival of those German planes.

"At about 1400 I was on my 20 millimetre with the Navy gunner. We all had gun stations with the Navy gunners. All of a sudden the Navy signalman I was standing next to said, "Hey, we got company!" I said "Oh really?" By now he was counting them off 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and I said to myself "Beautiful, they're looking for us off the convoy." I said that out loud and he gave me a whack. He said "You're wrong, they're German" He started counting again and did not stop until he had counted off 23 Ju88 torpedo bombers. They had flown out of Hammerfest to engage the already weather battered convoy.

The German planes came on in one straight line perhaps thinking that the lone Liberty ship would be nothing to blow apart on their way to the main convoy. The gunners aboard 'BACON' waited until the Germans came into range then they opened up with everything they had. The German pilots came in about 30 feet off the sea, they were determined and they roared in with throttles wide open. As they flew into the intense screen of fire put up by 'BACON's crew they found this lone ship could bite back.

Richard Burbine (NRC N01261) was on duty in the engine room when the General Alarm sounded and double-timed it for his battle station as a loader and ammunition passer on one of the 20mm guns. He recalls

the determination of the merchant seamen and the Navy gunners to turn them away. In the intense fire the only lull came when the guns were being reloaded or the red hot barrels changed. Burbine still feels that the Navy gunners should be commended for an outstanding job done. When the action was broken off the Germans went home less 9 aircraft and crews. They had hit HENRY BACON with all they had including a withering strafing of the ship from stem to stern with machine gun fire.

Back aft Robert Reed a messman was passing shells to the gun crew of the 5" stern mount. This gun accounted for a number of the German planes. It did not take the Germans long to break up their formation and come in at the 'BACON' from different directions thus creating a better chance for a successful torpedo run.

Amid the din of battle E.S. "Spud" Campbell the Chief Radio Officer was keying a lifeline for those aboard the ship. His S.O.S. sped across the ether and was picked up and acknowledged in Scotland. Of course in the convoy radio silence was in effect and no acknowledgement came from the escorts, although Campbell was sure they all heard his transmissions.

It was only a matter of time before the swarm of planes got a torpedo into their target and shortly thereafter Captain Carini gave the order to "Abandon Ship" with the explicit order "No crewman will enter the boats until all the Norwegians are safely put in the boats first". This was done with many of the crew helping the Norwegians from Sørøy to the questionable safety of the lifeboat. One fireman William 'Blacky' Willdridge helped, he bundled and wrapped up 2 year old Sofie Pederson and saw her safe in the boat. Later that little bundle would be taken by Len Phillips (NRC No 200), crewman aboard HMS OPPORTUNE who at the time thought he was passing a bundle of personal belongings.

There was only one lifeboat and it was clear that there was not going to be enough room for everyone and what followed was one of the finest chapters in the annals of wartime heroism.

Dick Burbine was having some problems of his own as he soon found himself in the freezing sea under an overturned boat. He had become snagged in some lines and other flotsam but was able to pull his boots off and surface. Finding a one-man life ring floating near by he latched on to it. Due to the wind and current he was swiftly swept away from the sinking ship. The last he saw of her she slipped stern first to her grave. He could hear the cries from other survivors in the dark but all too soon another nightmare came his way. Survival time in the Arctic Ocean was measured in minutes and he had already surpassed the normal allotment of time. The cold froze to the bone and in due course arms and legs could not function, fingers were numb. It would not be long before only the eyes could move the last phase before death. - What the torpedo and sinking ship did not accomplish the elements often did.

Chick Reed jumped over the side of the sinking ship about half way down the port side, a jump of about 40 feet into the icy sea. He found a timber which had washed off the deck and hung on until the chance to get aboard one of the 12 man life rafts.

Bosun Holcomb Lammon gave no thought to saving his own life but was rushing about on deck helping survivors over the side and tying up bundles of timbers and anything else that would float with the hope that some might survive when the ship went down. The bosun made no attempt to save his own life and was seen to go down with the ship in company with Chief Engineer Donald F Haviland. Haviland who had served in the Marines in the Banana Wars was no stranger to combat.

He had a safe place in the only lifeboat but looking up he saw young Bob Tatosky and ordered him into the lifeboat saying "Here you take my place, you are young and it does not matter so much if I get back". With that he got out of the boat with full knowledge that he would perish in the cold Arctic Ocean. He was last seen with Bosun Lammon aboard the sinking ship calmly standing side by side as though heading out on just another voyage.

"Spud" Campbell was ordered into the lifeboat with the Norwegians and brought along the emergency transmitter. Although operating this piece of equipment was only a matter of pushing a button, rigging the antenna was nothing short of impossible in the heavy seas and rocking boat. The trick was to rig it on the mast of the lifeboat, no easy task yet Campbell was successful and in so doing may have saved everyone as the rescuing destroyers homed in on the signal from the transmitter.

Captain Carini made no effort to leave the ship and was last seen on the wing of the bridge waving good-bye. In the final tally 15 of the crew and 7 members of the Naval Armed Guard were lost with the ship. All of the ships officers save for the Third Engineer and two Radio Officers were lost with the ship. None had faltered in their duty and when the call for women and children first came, all stood by the traditions of the sea, all aboard HENRY BACON put Norway first that day.

As is ever the case in such catastrophies the sea took many, yet others like Burbine, Reed, Tatosky and Campbell were spared and rescued by OPPORTUNE, ZEST and ZAMBESI. Burbine had defied all odds having survived some 6 hours in the sea but was frozen stiff when rescued. All of the Norwegians survived.

Later the news of this heroism reached the attention of the Norwegian Royal Family. When the survivors of HENRY BACON arrived at Scapa Flow they were mustered on the main deck forward and presented to the then Crown Prince Olav. He in turn trooped the line and took time to shake hands and speak with each man. He made a point to thank each of them for saving the lives of the Norwegian civilians at a great cost of lives to our crew. He commented that his government would award them with the Norwegian War Medal. As he had none with him at the time the decorations would be sent to the men via U.S. Maritime Commission. Dick Burbine still remembers. "I find it difficult to explain the feeling of joy and pride I felt in shaking hands with the future King of Norway. To us he represented all the things that I valued in mankind, strength, honesty, courage and a fierce devotion and dedication to his people and homeland.

It has been many years since that 23rd of February 1945 yet in those quiet moments of thanksgiving those who survived the sinking of SS HENRY BACON, American and Norwegian alike will never forget the experience.

THEMES FOR FORTHCOMING EDITIONS OF NORTHERN LIGHT

Response from contributors to this "SURVIVORS AND SURVIVAL" edition has been excellent. Let's keep up the good work in the ensuing editions. A reminder of the suggested themes:-

N.L.No.40: MARCH 1995: CONVOY PQ-18: A check of our membership list shows that nearly 15% of our members could have been involved in this horrific convoy. Now is your chance to tell your stories.

N.L.No.41: JUNE 1995: "V.E. AND V.J. DAYS": Where were you?

N.L.No.42: SEPTEMBER 1995: "HOSTILITIES ONLY" We already have some of your efforts but we will need many more!

N.L.No.43: DECEMBER 1995: "FUN & GAMES": Make it a real Christmas edition.

SURVIVAL FROM CAPTIVITY

THE FORGOTTEN CONVOY

From the U.S.Merchant Marine Publication "King's Pointer"

On 19 Jan. 1943 a convoy sailed from NY bound for Scotland. It was made up of ships of many designs, some were WWII 'Hog Islanders', all were down to their plimsolls. One of these ancient hulls was CITY OF OMAHA, whose reciprocating engine, when new, could provide 9 knots. The Third Mate was Jim Risk.

A North Atlantic winter crossing is a bad idea under the best of conditions. This convoy was about to experience the worst conditions. A blizzard had a good side, the subs could not find you. Then the wolfpack scattered the convoy. The old ships were being tested to the limit and the old boilers were breaking down. Drifting in these unbelievable seas was frightening until one contemplated the engineers trying to fix a boiler under these conditions. Damaged rudders requiring jury rigged steering devices added to the misery.

After being towed into Ireland and repaired eight American ships were sent to North Scotland to join Convoy JW53; destination was North Russia. Two days out this convoy was scattered by the Wolfpacks to regroup in Iceland. Two days out of Iceland the 56 ship convoy came under a 24 hour air attack. Again, the blizzards helped the convoy get through.

26 ships arrived in Murmansk, including the original 8 American ships. After unloading, 4 of the American ships were moved to Molotovsk (now Severodvinsk) about 18 miles from Archangel. It was now March 1943. Nothing was happening, except the ships supplies were slowly being diminished as the ships layover in this port.

The other 4 ships were likewise tucked away in a Russian port out of range of enemy bombers. Winter began to fade. The Summer solstice came and the crews enjoyed the delightful weather and the experience of the Midnight Sun.

The Russians knew where they were, the U.S.N. knew where they were, the crew knew where they were. Did their families? Did W.S.A.? Jim Risk's father learned that the War Department knew but were not talking. And the months dragged on and the food ran out. In September these men received their first mail. Had their letters reached their families back home?

In November 1943, eight months after arriving in North Russia, the eight American ships prepared to head back to the States. First to Scotland for provisioning and medical treatment. The Forgotten Convoy began arriving back in U.S. in December 1943.

What reason for this waste of ships and manpower? Some think it was due to Britain pulling its major war ships out of the north. But PQ17 sailed in July, and the survivors returned a few months later. Only after the PQ17 disaster was there a stand down of convoys to North Russia, and that did not last for more than a few months.

Whatever the reason, the men of eight ships experienced not only the frightening ordeal of the Murmansk Run but the added trials of living in a form of captivity for eight of the longest months of their lives.

The Society of the Forgotten Convoy is composed of the officers and men of CITY OF OMAHA; THOMAS HARTLEY; ISRAEL PUTNAM; FRANCIS SCOTT KEY; BERING and BEACON HILL.

::::::::::

GODFREY WINN

He was there, he survived, as we all did!

By John Beardmore No 235.

I first met Godfrey Winn, journalist and best selling author of "PQ17 - The Story of a Ship" (Hutchinson 1947) on a wooden jetty at Ekonomia on the Dvina Delta in July 1942, while playing or trying to play 'Sailor's hockey', using home made hockey sticks and a Turk's Head rope ball. It wasn't easy. Following the holocaust of PQ17 we had been shunted away from Archangel by the Ruskis to rot away for the rest of the summer in this godforsaken place.

Godfrey and I remained friends for 30 years until his sudden death while playing tennis at his country home near Brighton in 1947. I was a frequent guest at his rather grand parties both in London and the country., when I was usually introduced like, "Vivien (Leigh) darling - this is Johnny Beardmore" then, as an afterthought "We met in Russia during the war!" Big reaction of course! I never minded as it sent his stock up, too, which may have been why he said it.

Godfrey was a true Russian Convoy veteran and would undoubtedly have been an active patron of the North Russia Club had he lived. Apart from sailing voluntarily on PQ17, as Captain Lawson's guest on the ack-ack ex-banana boat POZARICA, he joined the Navy on his return from Russia to serve as an Ordinary Seaman on the cruiser CUMBERLAND. He could of course, knowing people like Lord Mountbatten, have got a soft officer job, but he chose the hard way. In spite of crushing the finger ends of both hands when an ammunition hatch fell on them when returning home after PQ17 in the American cruiser TUSCALOOSA, he still insisted on doing his bit in uniform. However he was discharged over a year later as physically unfit.

He continued to play an active role in the front line; flying out in raids with the R.A.F. over Bremen, to sea in a Rescue Tug and in Merchant Ships on the East Coast convoys and writing about it.

In spite of his soft exterior and slightly effeminate ways he was 'real steel' underneath. He also had a great compassion for the underdog (the Jarrow March etc) and had a remarkable way of making his listener feel important. In Fleet Street he was called 'Winifred God' behind his back by envious and unsuccessful colleagues. , but none dared say so to his face.

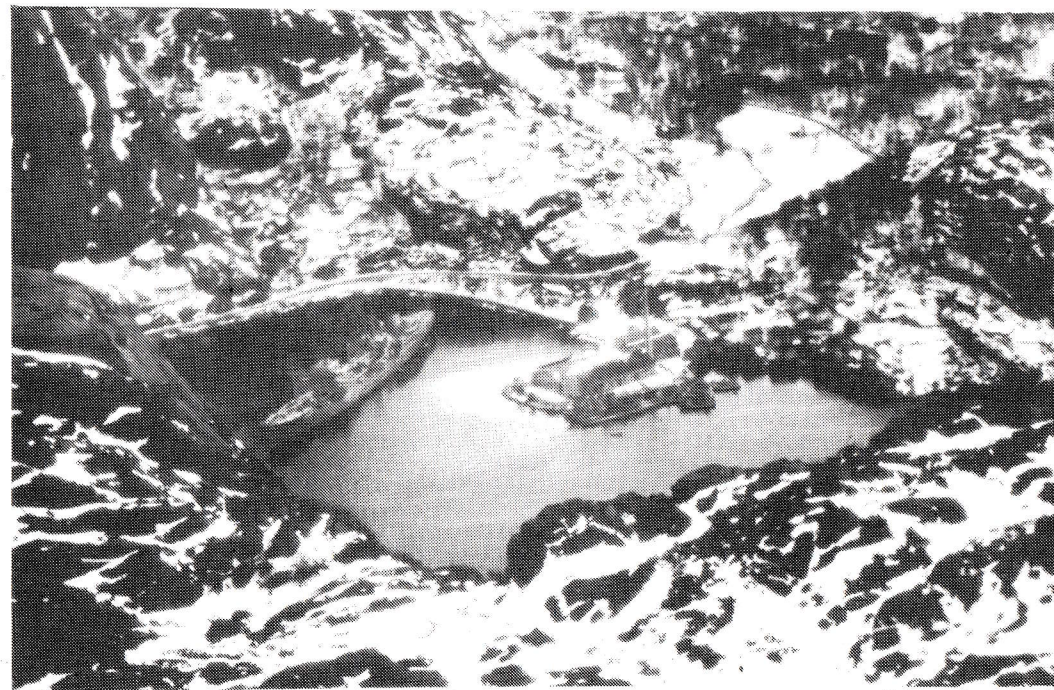
Nowadays his face is largely forgotten except to our generation. However, I still think of him with affection as a good kind friend and as part of that great camaraderie that we old 'uns all share.

When he died he kindly left me a small legacy "IN MEMORY OF THE DAYS WE WERE ON THE RUSSIAN RUN WHEN A LIFE-LONG FRIENDSHIP WAS FORGED" as well as one of fifty paintings from his private collection of 20th century artists, that he had bequeathed to fifty of his

closest friends. He also remembered the R.A.F. pilot of a Hudson bomber "HUGHIE BAILEY DFC.,DFM., WHO SAVED MY LIFE IN A RAID OVER STAVANGER DURING THE LAST WAR".

Among his wartime papers and photographs which his executors passed on to me as a naval friend, I found this photograph of the prison ship ALTMARK, from which were rescued captured British seamen in an audacious raid by HMS COSSACK in 1940.

.....



The reverse side of this photograph bears the following details:-
Stamp of R.A.F. Station, Leuchars, dated 22 October 1940.
The notation "Not to be published without submission to Air Ministry. (Signed S/Ldr J G Campbell.

Press cutting:- This photograph, the pride of the station, was given to Godfrey Winn last week on his return to a northern R.A.F. base from an air reconnaissance over Norway - a flight, incidentally, in which his machine fought off three Messerschmitts. It is an historic photograph never before published - the photograph which trapped the notorious prison ship Altmark in a Norwegian Fjord and led to the famous raid by the destroyer COSSACK. It was on the evidence of this photograph which shows Altmark in narrow waters, that the rescue was planned and so swiftly and successfully carried out.

DID I GET WET FEET ? - YES AND NO!
By John W.Maddern (No 159)

I was a GOSSAMER survivor. You ask in your "Notes" "were you rescued without getting your feet wet"? I think I was the first time, but on the second occasion (same incident) I think I just about got them wet up to the calf/knee.

It was like this :- GOSSAMER was at anchor in the Kola Inlet. Lovely day - sunshine - not too cold. Enemy aircraft - guns closed up. I was on the bridge when the first explosion occurred. Looked aft and saw shipmates moving along the upper deck. I asked to go and give a hand with the port whaler (C.O. was on the bridge - Cmdr. Tom Crease DSO) - down the ladder to wheelhouse, when a second almighty bang blew me head first across the wheelhouse against the bulkhead. Luckily I had a tin-hat on. Helped to get whaler away with the wounded, then two telegraphists (Tel. Morris and L/Tel 'Jock' Meek) staggered on deck with the confidential book chest from the W/T Office. Jock says, "Give us a hand Joe". I did. We shoved it overboard. That was something I had always had a hankering to do. (Is that unusual?)

Then Jock went over the side (port) - I later saw him ashore. The ship was beginning to turn over. Two stokers came out of the boiler room escape hatch - we exchanged pleasantries - and they went over the starboard guard-rail which was almost in the water. I decided to follow, and a Russian launch appeared almost alongside - I jumped (must have been a record) and got aboard - no wet feet - BUT GOSSAMER turned on her side - the mast caught the launch and sank her. There were other survivors on the launch and we were fortunate that another small craft came along and we got on to that. Eventually we were brought to HUSSAR where the M.O. was waiting to attend to those needing wounds looked at, etc.

Believe it or not, only about ten minutes elapsed from the bomb which just about blew our stern off, to the time the ship capsized and sank with some men still onboard. I have since then been convinced that time can stand still - given the right conditions. While waiting to see the M.O. Leading Seaman Jack Case was brought in.. He was obviously dying and as many of you know, he is now buried in Murmansk.

His fatal wound was another unusual happening. He was captain of "A" gun on the forecastle and invariably wore a helmet when closed up - except 24 June 1942. I learned years later that bomb No.2 aft on the Wardroom aft, over which the Oerlikon guns were sited, had blown guns and gunners away, and a piece of depression rail; had gone over the mast and landed on Jack Cases's head.

I was ashore at Vaenga for a while, then went to the Red Navy submarine base at Polyarnoe. Here one of the barrack blocks was occupied by Brits. R.N. folk, survivors on the top floor - mainly M.N. on the middle floor (many were frost-bitten or wounded) and some N.P.100 staff on the ground. The air raid shelter was against the cliff face some 50 - 60 yards away. We had plenty of exercise running there maybe 6 or 7 times a day (but not at night time as there was no darkness!) The reason I mention this is that one M.N. survivor EX-INDUNA - I believe had suffered terrible frost-bite in his lifeboat. The doctors in Murmansk had amputated both arms at the elbow and both legs at the knee. When a raid developed someone with four useable limbs would stop to pick him up and give him a pick-a-back ride to the shelter if there was time - if not, we would crouch in the stair well, semi-basement, and wait for things to settle.

The old jetty at Polyarnoe was interesting. The Russian submarines tied up alongside, and I often wandered into the torpedo stores in the tunnels cut out of the cliff face. I must say though that it was usually when there was a raid on otherwise I suppose I would very rapidly have been ejected.

I was put on MIDDLETON to come home - but after a week or so was taken off and eventually came home in MARTIN. Between MIDDLETON and MARTIN I was back at the submarine base and it was there that we survivors were issued with Red Navy uniforms (our clothes were a bit ragged by this time). MARTIN was in surface action on the way home, with ONSLAUGHT and MARNE. One GOSSAMER shipmate to my knowledge was killed in MARNE. I have since been told that others also died. But the strange thing about my S.T. shipmate who died, was that his name had come up as selected to be repatriated onboard H.M. Submarine (615. He turned down the offer of passage as too risky!

As you can imagine there was quite a lot of 'surprise - concern - consternation?' when we 'Russian' matelots were seen on the train from Wick - or was it Thurso - to London.

You should have seen the speed at which my survivors kit was issued in Pompey, and my 'new country's' uniform shoved on the scrap heap.

John W.Maddern.

(But still known as "Joe" by my GOSSAMER shipmates.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

MY FIRST TRIP TO SEA

By Austin Byrne No 226

0730, a BANG and a shudder, INDUNA was hit, the petrol on deck caught fire. I was on watch on the bridge, hungry and ready for my breakfast.

The Mate went to look, came back and reported that she had been hit aft and was sinking. The Captain ordered Abandon Ship, and said, "Go to your boat station, and good luck, boy".

At boat stations, people were running around, the Mate told the 3rd Mate to keep them back. Next he said to me "Into the boat, boy", he then ordered a couple others to do the same. A gunner came through the flames and he too, was ordered into the boat.

Then another chap came through, but he ran over coils of barbed wire that were burning, they rolled him into the boat still burning.

I then saw the gunlayer, he had always told us to sleep with our clothes and boots on, but he was freezing as he had taken his clothes off. He was the man who had drilled me, he just smiled and waved and went with the ship.

The Mate and the Bosun lowered the boat, the others were to scramble down to her, it was the weather side, the boat was smashing into the ship, we tried to keep her off but couldn't.

The Mate shouted for us to row round and take them off from the other side. There were nine in the boat, one took the tiller and three rowed. The others did not want to know. We had to go very wide to get round the flames.

As we came into the lee we made good progress and were getting close. But BANG another one, and down she went.

The weather worsened, the 3rd Mate who was a survivor from BALLOT was steering, but he had to put out the sea anchor and get down

into the bottom of the boat. The seas were very high, at times I thought she was going over, then we had to bail, and bail.

The nine in the boat included two gunners, the rest were merchant marine, one was a cabin boy of 17 who had few clothes on. He said he was frightened, I told him I was too, I told him to pray and he said he didn't know how. I said "Talk to God, he will listen".

One of the firemen said he was an atheist, three days later he prayed too. The lad who was the last to come from aft was very badly burnt, we covered him up as best we could, he had no shoes on his feet.

The seas broke over him, and soon he was covered in ice, his feet were clear of the water in the boat, but he caught all of the weather.

We talked to him as best we could, I think he was American, soon his face was covered in ice, his hands were like claws, he could not hold a cigarette, I lit it, put it in his mouth, then took it out. He kept saying, "Gunner, can I have a cig"? He was a good man, he never moaned like the others. He just kept saying "When you have bailed the boat, can I have a cig"? At the end of the first day he was all covered in ice. We were bailing and praying.

The others sat in the water and moaned, then one said "I am peeing myself, it is warm, it is lovely", so others did the same. You should have seen the scabs they had from it.

Day Two - the same bail and pray. I wanted to go to the toilet, it was taken down your pants, get a mate to shove a bucket under and do it quick. Then I did the same for him.

Day Three - we were thirsty, everything was frozen, I wanted to pee so I did it in a small cup, it looked like whisky but it did not taste like it. Just before dark we saw a ship coming straight to us but she turned and did not see us. So it was bail and pray some more. Our legs ached, we were tired, but we kept going on.

Day Four - Bail and pray and bail some more - I could say three prayers to each bucket, this was the best day for weather. At the start I had said "We are in the tail of the Gulf Stream, it will take us to land, we should get there in about six days". We sighted land a long way off on the night of the fourth day. The lad who was badly burned asked the gunner to turn the boat so that he could see it. He could not even turn his head. He next said, "Put an oar in my hands, I can rock my body".

Next we found the boat was getting lower in the water, it was the ice round her. Another chap sat on my legs and I chipped away. I saw a sea bird, it's wings were wet. I tried to lassoo it but could not, nor would it come to me saying "Birdie, Birdie". Another chap asked me what I wanted it for. I replied that I would chop off its head and drink it's warm blood - and I would have done.

The lad sitting on my legs said, "I can see a boat, I can see two, I can see three". I thought he was going crazy, but he WAS right, they were boats!

The boats came towards us with their guns trained on us. One of the firemen suggested that we shout "Comrade" - the others said "Shout American". I thought that if they were German and we shouted "Comrade" they may not want us. Or, if they were Russian and thought we were German, they would not want us. I said "If anyone shouts anything but 'English', I'll kick their head in. I have not come four days to go under now" - and I meant it!

That was it - we were picked up and made nice and warm. They gave us big tots of vodka, more than one, it went right down to your toes.

The others were put into bunks, the Yank (or whoever he was) called for me he touched me with his frozen hand and tried to get up and said, "We made it, Kid". Poor soul died the next day in Murmansk.

One of the rescue boat's crew, a lady I think, I am still not sure, was having trouble with the young boy, she wanted to get his clothes off, so I tried to help. We got his coat off, but he was black from his feet to half way up his back. She motioned that we should leave him - he also died next day in Murmansk.

Then we were transferred to another ship, I said to one of the other lads, "We will walk across". He said, "Tich, we cant", I replied "We can, and we will salute their flag". We did, and the crew went mad! On this ship we met the lads from the other lifeboat, but that is the Jim Campbell and Bill Short story. (Related elsewhere in this edition.

Next to Murmansk - we were met by an air raid. The hospital was a school, they gave us what they had, we were washed and taken to bed. I knelt down and gave thanks for getting there. The nurses looked amazed but I did it. Then it was sleep. When I awoke the bed was wet through, she just said never mind and changed it.

Then I saw the others and found out how lucky I had been. Most had their feet black right up over their knees, and also their hands. Mine were just numb. The Chief Steward was in the next bed to me, his legs were black and shiny with bits of red, way up above his knees. His hands were also very bad.

These people all lost limbs later on, but not whilst I was there. Most could not help themselves, so I had the job of giving them a bottle to wee in. There were few bottles so it was mostly jam jars. You put it in then lit them a cigarette. They nodded when you had to take it out - the cigarette I mean. One chap asked when I put his thing in the jar and before I lit his cigarette, "Aren't you going to wash your hands first - I just said "I'ts your thing".

They rubbed you with goose grease, and lit small jars to put on your chest, then injected you with vodka.

One day they bandaged one chap up, laid him over the bed, put a red rubber tube down his throat, the nurses running to and fro with big kettles. As they were small they had a low stool to stand on, to pour the water into the funnel to run through him to warm his inside.

Much more happened but I have no space for it.

For a long while I was confused about the chap who was in our boat, but I am now convinced that he is one of the Americans buried in our International Cemetery in Murmansk.

Who ever he was, the man was great, he froze for four days. Then died alone and never moaned. I was asleep when he died but I would have liked to have been with him at the end.

He was a great man - I will never meet another as good.

FIRST TRIP!! ARE THEY ALL LIKE THIS ?

oooooooooooooooo

A GOODALL SURVIVOR'S STORY

By Nancy Carter ex-Telegraphist

I would like to pay a tribute to the Captain and crew of HMS HONEYSUCKLE who, on April 29, 1945, rescued survivors from the torpedoed frigate HMS GOODALL. I think it is about time the story was told. The Captain of HONEYSUCKLE was Lt. Cmdr. J. Wright RNR (later RN) not Lieut MacKilligan as stated in "The Kola Run" and in the recently published books "Convoy" by Paul Kemp and "Arctic Convoys" by Richard Woodman.

The only option the Captain of HONEYSUCKLE had was to ram the stern of GOODALL, forming a bridge over which survivors could be rescued. Before doing this he lowered the seaboat to pick up survivors from the sea.

Oil from GOODALL's tanks which covered the surface of the sea caught fire and the seaboat, by now full of oil-covered survivors was in danger of being surrounded by flames. Luckily, HMS FARNHAM CASTLE saw this and quickly came to the rescue, playing her hoses to drive the flames away. At the same time she threw a line to the seaboat which unfortunately overturned throwing rescuers and rescued into the sea, forcing them to swim to FARNHAM CASTLE. Although the seaboat's crew made it, with some difficulty, only six of GOODALL's crew who had been picked up by them survived.

When HONEYSUCKLE rammed GOODALL she was holed and also caught fire but the flames were quickly put out and the Damage Control Party did the rest. Nine cot cases, of which I was one, were rescued from certain death and also rescued were those of GOODALL's crew who had stayed on board to help the wounded. All those rescued owe their lives to the heroic efforts of the crew of HONEYSUCKLE, especially those who jumped aboard GOODALL, which was by now a blazing inferno with ammunition exploding continuously, to assist in the rescue work.

The badly wounded were taken back to the emergency hospital at Vaenga and HONEYSUCKLE rejoined the convoy.

As for me, I spent a month in hospital, then came back to U.K. on the carrier HMS QUEEN, followed by a further six months in Mearns Kirk Hospital near Glasgow.

In 1992 I attended the HONEYSUCKLE reunion in Leamington Spa and was able to shake the hand of Jim Wright, the Captain, and thank him for saving my life and the lives of my shipmates. His modest reply was, pointing to the members of his crew, "They did all the work", I just took them there". He is now in his eighties and lives in Westward Ho, Devon!

I also met, among others, two of the seaboat's crew, Eric Robinson of Newcastle on Tyne and Len Mobbs of Leicester, both very brave men. Len has captured the GOODALL incident on canvas and has exhibited this and other Russian convoy paintings at the Flower Class Corvette Reunions at Leamington Spa.

EMPIRE LAWRENCE

By Bob Collins

When EMPIRE LAWRENCE in PQ16 was bombed and sunk on 27-5-42, I was thrown into the sea and bobbed about a bit trying to stay afloat, seemingly all alone, when H.M. Trawler LADY MADELEINE hove to and eventually saw me and lowered a small boat with two men. I was hauled in and lay in the bottom completely exhausted. I can still see this great seaboot on my hand but I couldn't feel any pain. One or two others piled in on top of me, the boat was overloaded and couldn't get back to LADY MADELEINE, so we were put aboard HYDERABAD which had now turned up. I do not remember anything else until the next day when I awoke completely naked. I was given a small sack which contained long-johns trousers of a sort, a jersey and a pair of carpet slippers. I went up on the upper deck in time to see men from EMPIRE PURCELL being picked up from the sea.

On reaching Murmansk all of us DEMS ratings were literally dumped ashore to fend for ourselves, there was snow on the quay and the carpet slippers came in very useful! Some of us scrounged a lift in an ambulance and were taken to a hospital, but were immediately taken back to the quay without even getting out.

An American sailor (I think he was a Chief) came from nowhere and quickly organised things. He acquired a motor boat and went around the U.S. ships in the harbour and came back with some more survivors as well as food, cigarettes and clothing. He later took us across the river to some empty huts where we stayed for a week or so, being supplied with everything by this 'chief' who was a genius at organising.

There was a small beach where we used to sit and watch the bombing of Murmansk which was at least twice a day. Or, we would climb a hill which was seemingly barren, but during the raids AA guns would appear from underground, fire at the enemy and then disappear from sight. Apparently the soldiers had abandoned their camp (ours) and lived underground with their guns.

One day a ship's boat came by with an officer at the tiller who completely ignored us, until someone recognised him as his Divisional Officer when he was aboard EDINBURGH before she was sunk. Next day all DEMS ratings were taken up to the Red Army camp at Vaenga where we joined the crew of EDINBURGH. We slept on a straw mattress on a raised platform in a long hut, the food was the same as the soldiers got. For breakfast there was Kasha which was a sort of porridge made from maize, two slices of mahogany coloured bread and a cup of tea (chai) supposedly made from pine needles. Dinner was a watery soup with a few bits of green and if you were lucky (or perhaps unlucky), a couple of bits of grey meat which I think was goat or yak and a compote made with raisins and a piece of bread, this time with butter and a cup of chai. That was it, day after day with little change. We were issued with a small bar of soap which didn't lather and the water to wash with was cold and in a long trough, with six inch nails sticking out from the bottom all the way along. Imagine if you will - pushing up a nail to let a trickle of water into your hands, holding the soap and getting it to your face all in one go. There were no baths or showers, we could not shave, or wash our cloths. Most of us got crabs

and had to shave off with a rusty razor held by a sick bay tiffy. I can remember the only stand up bath I had was in a big wooden tub tended by an old lady while a bevy of Red Army girls looked on through the windows while they waited to come in.

The homeward bound convoy QP13 was due to sail on 27th June and of course EDINBURGH's crew had priority and left us a few days before. For the berths that were still available we had to cut the cards and I was unlucky with about twenty others.

On 24th June we were on the quay forlornly hoping that a miracle would happen and a ship would be able to take us home. The air raid sirens sounded and we took shelter aboard the Russian destroyer GROMKI. We saw a boat with about six men in it pulling for the quay. GOSSAMER had been sunk in the harbour. Among their survivors was an officer who took command and some days later told us that we would definitely go home in the next convoy which had left UK, with Carriers, Battleships, Cruisers and almost the entire Navy as escort! Unfortunately, this was PQ17 and for the next week or so survivors continued to swell our ranks.

Sometime in July a number of us took passage in EMPIRE BARD to Archangel where we were billeted in a school at Solombula just outside the city, where we were given Russian Navy uniforms and we were able to dump our (by now) filthy survivors kit. Life now became tolerable because we could take the tram into the city where there was a cinema. We could also go to the International Club where we could get small meals like omelettes, and quite often be given vodka by the Red Army soldiers. There was also an open air market where things like eggs, tobacco, vegetables and what looked like rabbits were sold quite openly. There was a curfew at 2300 of which nobody took any notice. I had a young lady friend Onya Putalovoy who introduced me to a bar below a cinema in Solombula, where beer of a sort (tasted of onions) was available. We sometimes went to the jetties where the ships that had got through tied up. We scrounged such things as white bread, corned dog, and English cigarettes. One such ship was POZARIKA, although there were Red Army women sentries on guard we were never stopped, although we did give them an occasional cigarette or slice of bread, to prevent a jab with a bayonet.

Sometime in August we were marched down to the docks and distributed between three destroyers MARTIN, MARNE and ONSLAUGHT. I was in MARTIN and when we went to sea the same day, we were told that we were not going home as we thought, but to complete the patrols that had been allocated. Our first task was to pick up TUSCALOOSA and two destroyers 800 miles away from Iceland and escort them to Murmansk to pick up hospital cases.

We eventually got to Scapa on 28 August where we had our first decent meal for months, and some stomachs couldn't take it !

AND I'M STILL WAITING FOR MY MEDAL !

o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o

THE SINKING OF HMS LAPWING

Excerpts from a letter between club members followed by the Official Report on the sinking.

Submitted by E.M.Williams No 910 on behalf of I.A.Leitch No 1378.

I will give you what information I can concerning the sinking of LAPWING in the Arctic, fifty years ago next March! How the years roll by, yet the details of that ordeal remain clear to me as it were yesterday. By a strange coincidence, a few houses away from me lives a chap called Martin Holt, who was in ALLINGTON CASTLE when she gallantly picked up survivors from LAPWING, but he recalls nothing of the incident. Why should he, then an eighteen year old coder encased in the W/T office and seldom aware of what the ship was doing, or where!

I should point out that I hardly knew a soul aboard LAPWING, as I joined her barely an hour before she sailed. I had joined CYGNET, senior ship of 7th/8th Escort Group, in August 1944 as staff A/S officer We escorted continuous Arctic convoys, and in six months our Group had lost KITE, LARK, TUNSBURG CASTLE, DENBIGH CASTLE and BLUEBELL, all in the same graveyard area off the Kola Inlet.

.....The Captain of LAPWING was knocked out by the explosion and remembered nothing. When he came to, in Vaenga Hospital I was by his bedside and he murmured "We are approaching Kola so I must go up to the bridge". Later he asked me to write a report of the sinking, which more or less tells the sad story. I never met him again and he did not attend the Board of Enquiry at Greenock.

THE REPORT

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report of my impressions of the sinking of H.M.S."LAPWING" on 20th. March 1945.

2. On the forenoon of 20th. March, 1945, in approximate position five miles north of KILDIN Lt. No.22, LAPWING and ALLINGTON CASTLE were on the extended screen six miles ahead of Convoy JW65. The screen had originally consisted of LAPWING and the five "CASTLE" class Corvettes, but at 0930 BAMBOROUGH CASTLE and LANCASTER CASTLE had been detached to stand by one of the merchantmen in the convoy which had been torpedoed at 0917, and shortly after 1000 ALNWICK CASTLE and FARNHAM CASTLE had dropped out of the line to investigate an asdic contact classified by ALNWICK CASTLE as "probable submarine".

3. ALLINGTON CASTLE was stationed 4000 yards on LAPWING's port beam, course 270 degrees, speed 12 knots, zigzag No.45 (LAPWING was weaving 40 degrees either side of M.L.A.). Radar was carrying out an "all-round" sweep, asdics sweeping 80-80 relative, and "unifoxer" streamed and operating efficiently. "B" Guns crew had been ordered to keep a sharp lookout either side, in addition to normal lookouts, as a sou'westerly wind was just strong enough to cause "white-horses" on wavetops, which considerably reduced the chances of sighting a U-boat's periscope.

4. Shortly after 1100 I went into the Plotting Room, on the after end of the Bridge, to discuss something with Commander Binnie R.N. (H.M.A/S Experimental Establishment, Fairlie), who was taking passage in LAPWING. A few minutes later a heavy explosion occurred which threw us off our feet and wrecked the A.R.L. Plot, P.P.I. and Asdic equipment in the adjacent cabinet. The door of the compartment jammed and would not open and it was some minutes before the attention of those on the bridge could be attracted, when A.B. Birtwhistle kicked the door panels in from outside and let us out.

5. I looked over the side and noticed that the way was off the ship and she was beginning to settle --- it appeared that her back was broken and there was a large hole torn in the upper deck, starboard side, abreast the funnel. The whaler had disappeared and two empty Carley floats were visible some distance astern. Oil fuel covered a lot of the superstructure. I considered it unlikely that the ship would remain afloat more than a few minutes.

6. I then saw Lieutenant Embleton-Smith R.N.V.R., Navigating Officer organising the slipping of the port forward Carley float with some ratings. Surgeon Lieutenant Wilson R.N.V.R. was on the bridge and I said "Where is the Captain?". He replied "He has been knocked out, I am just going to attend to him". I then saw the Captain lying unconscious on the port side of the bridge under the chart table.

7. Sub Lieutenant Baldwin R.N.V.R., Officer of the Watch, had apparently sustained a broken leg, so Commander Binnie and myself assisted him down to the wheelhouse and then lowered him on a line to the upper deck starboard side. Here I noticed Petty Officer Doney efficiently organising matters for the care of the wounded, and he had already got Sub Lieutenant Worker R.N.V.R., Group Radar Officer, who seemed badly injured, in a Neil-Robertson stretcher. The starboard Carley float had apparently already been slipped and was about twenty yards on the beam, so the problem of getting casualties off the ship appeared a serious one.

8. Some ratings on "B" gun deck were cutting free a Flotanet from the starboard guard rails, but there appeared insufficient life-saving equipment for the large number of ratings, about one hundred, which had mustered on the forecastle. I shouted to them to cut everything adrift that would float off, such as the whaler's gear which was slung overhead on the Bofors gun platform support.

9. About fifteen minutes had now elapsed since the explosion, and loud breaking up noises could be heard from the region of the boiler room. On reaching the upper deck I saw that the ratings forward were starting to jump over the side, as the ship was now settling rapidly and listing heavily to starboard, so I assisted Sub Lieutenant Baldwin through the guard rails into the water and followed myself. A few seconds later the ship broke in half, the forward part capsized to starboard and the after part floated vertically, stern uppermost. As I swam clear to avoid being fouled by the mast and rigging, I saw the Captain holding on to the port side of the bridge, as it turned over, and then drop clear into the water. A few moments later I saw Surgeon Lieutenant Wilson in the water; he spoke to me and appeared extremely cheerful.

10. I found my inflatable lifebelt gave ample bouyancy. There was

also a vast amount of floating wreckage such as planks, dambouys, floats and cork lifejackets to help support one, although oil fuel made it difficult to grasp them. I clung to a wooden plank but later transferred to a Flotanet attached to a fully manned Carley float, whose occupants were singing cheerfully and appeared admirably confident of being rescued.

11. Snow began to fall, and about half an hour later I found myself drifting under ALLINGTON CASTLE's starboard quarter, but cannot recollect anything after this until I found myself being stripped and cleaned on board her in the seamen's bathroom. I would like to pay tribute to the gallant rescue work of the Officers and ratings of ALLINGTON CASTLE, and I feel certain that had it not been for their untiring efforts our casualties must have been much higher.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

Lieutenant, Royal Navy.

EMPIRE BEAUMONT - PQ 18

By Bill Lyuskey (No 1306)

I was really a passenger on PQ 18. In the last few months I had survived being sunk in the ASHBY, seven days in an open boat, rescued, sent back to UK from Gibraltar on the BATORY. It was full of troops, survivors from several ships and U-boat survivors. Lice from many countries made our overcrowded bodies an even worse misery. Had we been torpedoed I think they could have swum us safely to shore. Then a two-month trip to pick up ammunition from the USA and return it to UK.

I'd had enough of being a target for U-boats, but after a few days leave of course I had no option but to report to the Pool. I had a fantasy that some benevolent official would tap me on the shoulder and say, "For you my son the war is over". Instead, the Shipping Master told me of a job going in Russia. "It's working on a crane ship based in Archangel. All it does is move around the port to different ships unloading heavy cargo like planes and tanks" - he paused - "Are you interested?" I wasn't sure, but the bit of Terra Firma under my feet might reduce my terror.

He went on, "I can't send anyone there, it's purely voluntary, you can refuse this duty". My instinct was against volunteering for anything, but the thought of having ground under my feet for two years was appealing.

"You mean that this crane ship will be in one river, one port, only moving to different ships?" I was suspicious! "That's right, it should be right up your ally if you're fed up with trips. It has 80 ton lifting Jumbos, so it should be unsinkable. If the worst happened you could swim to shore. You have to sign a two-year contract though".

I said I'd take it, it'd be a bit different. The Shipping Master gave me the address in Newcastle where I should sign on. I met my oldest friend Pat Shaughnessy on the way. "I'm going to Newcastle this ship that stays in a Russian port for two years" I told Pat, "It doesn't go to sea"

His eyes lit up. "I'll come with you then, there may be another job. I wouldn't mind that".

The Newcastle shipping office assured him that they had a job for him, in fact they were suspiciously eager to get another volunteer. We were given an advance cheque to buy warm clothes; we cashed the cheques and drank the money.

Two days later we mustered at Newcastle station with another thirty men. We entrained to Glasgow where we were split into two groups of fifteen and billeted on different ships. Pat and I were on EMPIRE BEAUMONT, which sailed to join a convoy in Loch Ewe. In convoy the next call was Reykjavik where we waited without leave until some American ships joined us before we set off for Russia. This convoy was PQ 18.

While waiting we heard about PQ 17 - the previous convoy which had been a disaster. There were forty ships in PQ 18 but there appeared to be many more escort ships than merchantmen, number of them American. It was a massive fleet. "Doesn't that give you a feeling of Confidence?" Pat asked, indicating the armada.

The pessimist in me replied, "I'd feel more confident if they felt we didn't need them".

The first indication of trouble, on 8 September was the sight of a scout plane, miles out of range, which circled the convoy, then apparently lost it in the low hanging cloud. A sense of impending doom pervaded the ship.

The Germans regained contact on 12 September; submarines arrived first, but it was the next day before three of them penetrated the defence to sink two freighters.

Pat and I were gloomily having a cup of tea below decks when the sirens screamed for Action Stations. The high level bombers came first but they didn't sink anything.

Although we were officially passengers of course we had an action station. We were together, passing ammunition to the naval gunners manning the aft deck gun. We were standing on top of the armoury, the open door giving us a full view of the various weapons of destruction. I was scared to death at the thought of a direct hit on all that ammo!

Pat grumbled "I wish they'd close that bloody door".

Suddenly HELL broke loose. Already shell shocked, the most ear-shattering noises nearly knocked me out, no-one had been issued with earplugs. Bombs, shells, their own guns, every one of the escort vessels blasted away; no planes were taking off from AVENGER - we heard later they had been caught unawares - so there was no air defence from them at that time.

The high level bombers were out of sight. Their bombing wasn't meant to hit a target, it was meant to demoralise and it succeeded. The terrifying crack of their explosives hit like a punch to the head and body.

But the most awesome sight was an approaching black cloud of torpedo bombing planes, coming in low and blasting away with their cannon. I found out later that there were 44 torpedo and 55 high level bombers in just one wave.

I was demoralised, deaf and terrified. For the first time in action I felt my own mortality. I thought the planes were aiming

straight at me, personally; in fact, I saw distinctly the face of one of the German pilots so low were they. Cannon shells were bursting all around us, so Pat and I fell to the deck, behind a hatch in search of shelter. It was still too close to the armoury for comfort and a terrific smell of cordite was choking me.

During a slight lull we ran along the deck looking for shelter. Pat was about six feet behind me when there was a terrific bang and a flash of light. I looked back and to my horror saw Pat and another Jarrow man blown over the side. I was sick with fear and misery, sure that Pat was dead, but I could do nothing except to continue to run towards my allocated lifeboat no-one was doing anything about launching it so when I saw another one being lowered I got into that. The ship was burning fiercely, flames were licking everywhere.

The eight men in the boat rowed like demented creatures to get the lifeboat away before their ship exploded and I saw the massive hole in the EMPIRE BEAUMONT, exactly where we'd been having tea fifteen minutes earlier. Two days earlier we had been shouting across the water to Tyneside men we knew on the EMPIRE STEVENSON; suddenly I saw it explode and quickly sink. All hands were lost.

The noise was driving me insane, I nursed my head in my hands trying to block out some of the din. The battle was still raging. It was dangerous even in the lifeboat with so much cross fire from ships trying to hit the new wave of low flying torpedo planes and in the panic often hitting each other. God knows how many 'own goals' were scored.

Eventually the planes had to return to occupied Norway to refuel and reload and a comparative quiet returned. The sea was filled with lifeboats, rafts, hatch covers, lifebelts, oil, debris of all descriptions; and bodies - everywhere.

Only the dead were silent, some of the wounded were screaming and all were calling to be picked up.

I saw a German torpedo plane floating in the water with three airmen standing on the wings waving for rescue, a naval boat speeded toward it and the next time I looked both plane and men had disappeared.

We had twenty men in the boat by now, rescue ships were going alongside boats and rafts, the survivors had to clamber up the rope netting that had been thrown over the sides of the ships.

Our salvation was a Fleet sweeper, SHARPSHOOTER. Once aboard we were sent below amongst the sailor's bunks, where we had to stay for the next four days only coming up occasionally for a breath of air. During one of these breaks I heard a violent explosion and all the air was knocked out of my lungs. It was the American ammunition ship MARY LUCKENBACH, which went up with such massive force that it took several of the attacking German planes. All hands lost.

Altogether, the attacks lasted for five days but it felt like an eternity, with endless noise. We had been sunk on 13 September. We survivors cowered in the cramped space aboard SHARPSHOOTER, our rescue ship, listening to the depth charges exploding. A great calm had descended on me. I was almost catatonic, I couldn't hear speech and I spent much of the voyage with my fingers in my ears. During a pause whilst the planes returned for refuelling we were transferred to the trawler DANEMAN. Some of the convoy broke off to go to Murmansk, but the planes and U-boats followed and attacked our convoy right into the White Sea and only finally departed at the mouth of the River Dvina.

Eventually, on 18 September we docked at a little timber town

but we were not allowed to go ashore for four days until our identity was checked and the wounded saw Russian doctors. Those of us with what were considered light wounds - we could walk and eat - saw no one. We were taken to Archangel and registered at the Intourist Hotel.

I needed to walk even before I needed a drink, so I took a brisk stroll along the main road and to my enormous relief I ran into Pat who had equally believed me to be dead.

Yes of course we got drunk. And we were two years in Russia, but it wasn't quite the way the Shipping Manager had envisaged it, but that's another story! And I'm still deaf!!

THE ABOVE 'SURVIVAL' REPORT COULD HAVE BEEN HELD OVER UNTIL THE "PQ-18" EDITION IN THE NEW YEAR, BUT IS PUBLISHED HERE TO REMIND OUR CONTRIBUTORS OF THE NEXT THEME.

WE CONCLUDE THE 'SURVIVAL' STORIES WITH THE SHIP THAT WE STARTED WITH - S.S. INDUNA.

THE BILL SHORT STORY

PQ-17 and PQ-13 Convoys were scattered, PQ-17 on orders and PQ-13 by a ferocious Arctic storm, the result was that the merchant ships were sitting ducks for U-boats and aerial attacks.

My ship, INDUNA, was part of PQ-13. It is an awesome experience being all alone in a mighty big ocean with only a Norwegian whaler for company, it's company was soon lost when it ran out of fuel, and having towed it for some time, another Arctic storm broke the tow. We circled around until daylight without finding SILJA, only for a U-boat to find us, it's torpedo hitting NO 5 hold, which contained aviation spirit, the result a massive ball of flame erupted.

By the time that I reached my boat station, both lifeboats had been launched. The reason being the gale and the fear of the boats being smashed against the ship.

My shipmates were shouting to me to jump, one hesitates when one knows the water in March is mighty cold and it was a long way down and I could not swim.

When one sees a ball of fire approaching, it makes one's mind up, so I jumped and was eventually dragged into the lifeboat, an open one at that, only to discover that it was overloaded and waterlogged, so movement was impossible.

Something that I shall never forget, is my shipmates, who were still on board the stricken INDUNA scrambling up to the bow of the ship hoping for rescue, after the U-boat Commander had fired a second torpedo into a ship that was already sinking. Would one call it murder when they fired the second torpedo whilst the remaining lifeboat was being launched?

I was frozen stiff, having been in the water, no all weather clothing in 1942, the water barrel was frozen stiff as was the water pump.

I spent four days in that waterlogged boat, sitting in water with only the buoyancy tanks keeping us afloat.

By the end of four days I was so weak that I could hardly move. Those of us that were still alive, 17 out of the original 35 had given up all hope of being rescued.

Suddenly an aeroplane was spotted and finally I was dragged aboard a Russian ship, with the rest of the survivors.

I was taken to a makeshift hospital in Murmansk, had a tube pushed into my stomach and tepid water poured down the tube to thaw the ice that had formed in my stomach. It was discovered that gangrene

had set in, in both my legs, so I was quickly taken down to a large classroom, the hospital had been a school. I was placed on table, a white screen was up in front of me and told that my legs were being cut off. Medical supplies were non-existent so no general anaesthetic, I passed out, was delirious for three days and then discovered that they had in fact chopped off my legs.

I found myself in a large assembly hall, full to overflowing with beds, many cases of gangrene with open wounds to allow the poison to drain away. One can imagine the smell, because the windows were all boarded up, there was no ventilation.

Dressings were a nightmare, it was like taking paper off raw meat.

8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8

151 WING RETURNS TO VAENGA

After a few hiccups, the invitation from the Russian Veterans Committee materialised for members of 151 Wing Association to return to Russia.

The British party comprised: ERIC CARTER ex Pilot 81 Squadron; VIC BASHFORD Engineer 134 Squadron; BILL LOWES Engineer 151 Wing; PETER KNAPTON ex Pilot 134 Squadron; FREDDIE CREWE ex Pilot 81 Squadron and PETER FEARN 151 Wing Association Organiser.

They were accompanied throughout by Sqn. Leader Ian Barrowcliffe the Assistant Air Attache.

So, very close to the day 53 years on, (5th August) we departed U.K. this time for Moscow where we were met by ten members of the Russian Veterans Committee. A quick round of T.V. interviews (with the usual welcoming toast) and then aboard the coach to the military airfield of Klin.

At Klin, the Base Commander and staff entertained us to supper (with toasts of course) before we departed on the Russian Air Force AN-24 for Monchegorsk. A flight of about 3½ hours.

There we were greeted by Lt. Col. Vladimir Filipyenko who commands the base. The greeting was specifically very warm as the base houses the 2nd Guards Regiment whose predecessors were our comrades-in-arms at Vaenga in 1941. We eventually got to the hotel at 0300 hrs.

On Saturday morning, 6 August, we met the Group Commander Lt. General Alexander Maryenkov who, with his staff, escorted us to meet 2nd Guards Regiment personnel. A small exchange of presentations and experiences - old and new. Then out to the airfield to be familiarised with their operational aircraft - MIG-31 and SU-27. Extremely interesting for us all.

After lunch a tour of the town and local museum to be followed by a visit to the 2nd Guards Regiment Museum. This museum features Captain Boris Saforov, one of the very successful Russian pilots, and the first to solo in the Hurricane in 1941. This completed the semi-formal part of Saturday. In the evening the Mess laid on a very good farewell meal and entertained us with some excellent singing. (Between toasts of course).

On Sunday, 7 August we left Monchegorsk airbase for a short flight north to Severomorsk. Whilst approaching to land two of us commented that the hills looked identical to Vaenga. They were - Severomorsk overlays - and is much larger than our little airfield at Vaenga. 'Some things never change'. We had arrived at the main point of our visit.

After leaving the aircraft we were greeted by the Commander North Fleet Aviation - Major General Nikolai Murtovanov and staff and the Group Commander from Monchegorsk (who had travelled up to be with us for our last round of engagements).

We had a very interesting visit to the Naval Air Force Museum, where a section is devoted to 151 Wing. An exchange of gifts were made before visiting the museum aircraft hangar. Where, of course, a Hurricane was on display. It was modified to carry four cannon, as opposed to the 12 machine-guns we had. The engineer responsible for the 'mod' was there - he having served with us at Vaenga in 1941. Our next duty was to go to the Military Cemetery at Safornova where we laid roses on the graves of our fallen comrades.

Lunch was taken with the Commander North Fleet Aviation, the Director of the Museum and the Commander of the Group.

Back to Klin, supper and coach back to Moscow. For the rest of the visit we stayed with Assistant Air Attache Sqn.Ldr. Ian Barrowcliffe.

Monday 8 August was a quiet day, we behaved like tourists and enjoyed the Metro and Red Square.

Tuesday 9 August we met up with the veterans, took the Metro to Novodevichy Convent Cemetery where remains of the famous are buried.

After lunch we visited Monino Air Force Museum. The Director greeted us and conducted us through the museum. Of special interest was the well preserved PE-2, a Russian bomber which we escorted many times in 1941. Incidentally, without losing any. Monino has many acres of space outside in which aircraft are parked and on display. These range from WWII aircraft through Turbo-props (BEAR) to the Concorde. Helicopters abound, some small, and some very large. An interesting day.

In the evening the AAA gave a supper party for the veterans where we were able to say farewell formally.

Wednesday 10 August - our day of departure arrives - all too soon. A lunch with the Defence Attache at his residence at Vaktangova Ulitsa. This residence had significance for two of the party, as the building housed in 1941 the British Military Mission in Russia. One of the veterans Bill Lowes stayed on after the departure of 151 Wing and became a member of the Air Section at the Mission. He remembers the house well, as does Peter Knapton, who later returned to Moscow as Air Attache in the 1950s.

Finally off to Sheremetyevo where after a moving farewell to our Russian Veterans, we boarded our BA flight for our return to the U.K.

We now look forward to a reunion with some of our Russian friends when they join us for the 151 Wing get-together on 29 September in London.

A great visit during which we were made genuinely welcome many times over. In spite of the difficulties the country faces, their generosity was unsurpassed. Our sincere thanks to the Russian Veterans Committee for an unforgettable reunion.

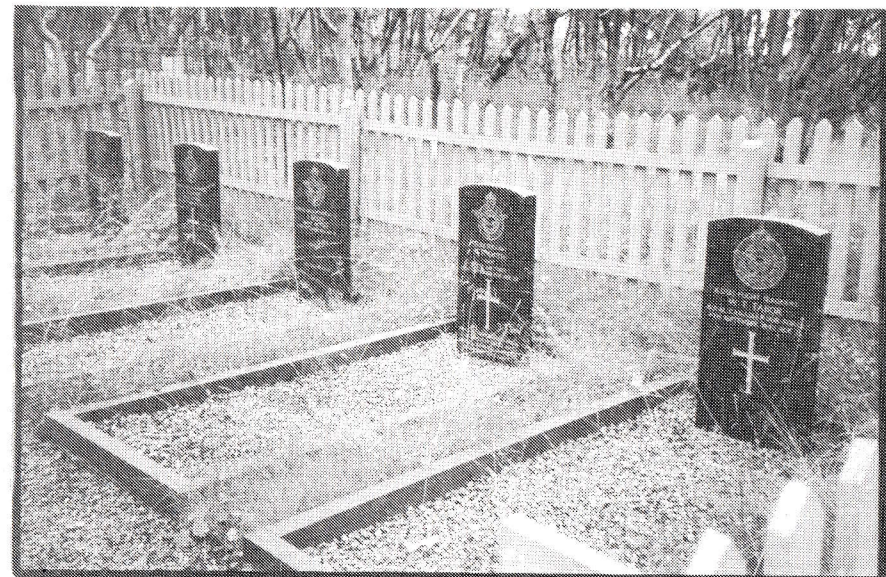
However, we veterans owe a special vote of thanks to Peter Fearn for his untiring efforts in making the arrangements for our visit - no

mean task. Additionally, our thanks go to Ian Barrowcliffe who accompanied us (and took the photos below); his equanimity and fluency in Russian ensured a very smooth visit.

F.J.Crewe, No 1654.



RAF VETERANS VISIT AUG 1994



TOP: RAF veterans at Monchegorsk with fellow Russian flyers from Vaenga 1941. The aircraft is a SU-27.
BOTTOM: RAF graves at Vaenga.

4TH RAF NORTH RUSSIA REUNION

The 4th reunion of our Vaenga 'flyers' took place at the Victory Services Club on Thursday 29th September 1994. The Trafalgar room was completely full when the gathering sat down to an excellent four course meal. Amongst those present were five Russian guests GOLODNIKOV, ARUSHANOV, KRIVOSHCHIEKOV, POYARKOV and TSARIMSAKOV, all of whom had been co-flyers with 151 Wing in Vaenga in 1941. Speeches (but not the vodka toasts) were kept to a minimum and the reunion was covered by TV from Stavropol.

On the following day the Russian guests were taken to the RAF Museum at Hendon where they presented a "G" Space-suit and helmets to the museum. After a tour of the museum the party moved on to their embassy in London to meet the new ambassador, Anatoly Adamishin. Then followed a days tour of the Cotswolds before returning to Russia on 2nd October.

oooooooooooo

RUSSIANS VISIT R.A.F. MUSEUM AT HENDON

Following the reunion reported above our Russian comrades, Golodnikov, Arushanov, Krivoshchekov, Poyarkov and Tsarimshakov, all flyers at Vaenga, where accompanied by NRC members of 151 Wing to the museum at Hendon.

Following introductions to the Director and Curator, our friends presented two flying helmets and a "G" suit to the museum. The Director promised that these valuable pieces of memorabilia will be put on display in the appropriate section of the museum.

The visitors spent many hours in the museum and were particularly interested in the Hurricanes and Hampdens on display, being aircraft of a similar type that they flew at Vaenga in 1941.

oooooooooooo

THE ROYAL TOUR TO ST PETERSBURG

&

MURMANSK CELEBRATIONS

Sunday 16 October to Monday 24 October 1994 are dates that will be forever etched in the memories of a small group of our members, these were the dates which included Her Majesty's visit to Moscow and St Petersburg, and also the celebrations in Murmansk on the 50th anniversary of the final defeat of Hitler's armies in the Polar Regions.

Chairman Dick Squires, led the NRC group which comprised Peter Skinner, Mervyn Williams, Hughie Noble, Walter Rolling and Ron Young. Also present were three members of R.C.C., one of whom is also a member of N.R.C., as is one of the two ex-R.A.F. veterans who were invited. On the following pages, we have listed in chronological order the lead up to the momentous days which ensued. It was a wonderful tenth birthday present for North Russia Club to be amongst the invited guests - what a pity there could not have been more.

1st JULY: Fax received from organising committee for the Chairman to bring a party of six to the 50th Anniversary Celebrations in Murmansk. Names to be submitted by 1st August.

28th JULY: After much deliberation and thought the following names were submitted:- Shipmates R.D.SQUIRES; P.A.SKINNER; M.WILLIAMS; P.HOLLORAN; H.NOBLE; W.ROLLING and R.YOUNG. (P.Holloran was forced to cancel at a later date but we were unable to obtain a visa for a replacement.

12th AUGUST: Informed by telephone from Moscow that three members would be invited to attend Her Majesty's visit to St. Petersburg prior to the Murmansk celebrations.

9th SEPT: Official invitation received via M.O.D. and Foreign Office.

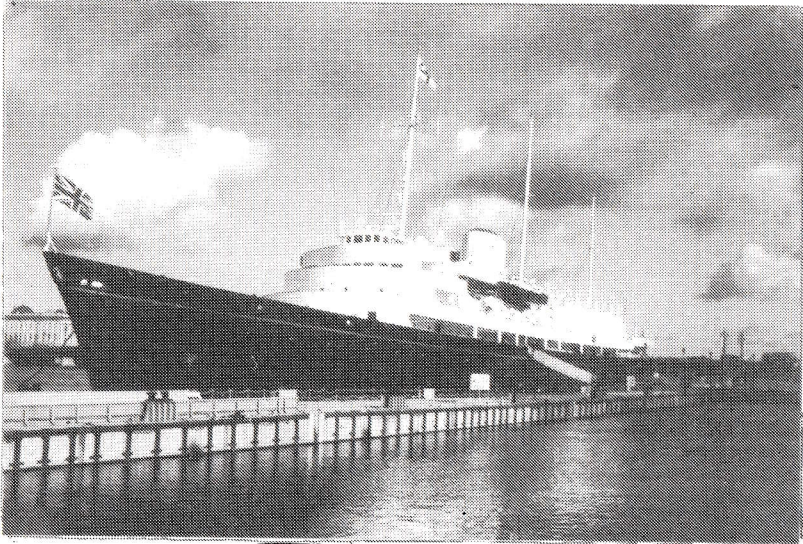
10th SEPT: Permission obtained for remaining three nominees to attend St Petersburg events as self financed guests.

SUNDAY 16th OCTOBER: Shipmates Noble, Rolling and Young took off from Heathrow on BA878 for St Petersburg and the Moscv Hotel.

Shipmates Squires, Skinner and Williams reported to The Royal Suite at Heathrow for the flight to St. Petersburg aboard an RAF VC10 of the Queens Flight. Also onboard were members of the Buckingham Palace staff. We were allocated the arm-chair seating and the R.A.F. cabin crew had been instructed to give us 'the full treatment' This they did with no exception - the best airborne meal we have ever had, plenty to drink, visits to the flight deck to meet the plane's captain Squadron Leader Paul Atherton (we were to meet him again later as they were booked in at the same hotel as us. On landing we were met by John Devine from the British Consulate. We were given a briefing regarding the programme and transported to an excellent hotel the Nevskij Palace on Nevski Prospect. After contacting the other half of our group, we all met at the hotel and discussed the future programme. At this time we met half a dozen matelots from the Royal Yacht and H.M.S. Glasgow. How good to see British matelots walking the streets in uniform. It's safe to do it in Russia, but not in the United Kingdom! So we decided to have "A Run ashore" - yes we found a few pubs with Danish and German beer, and Mervyn Williams ended the evening by encouraging the young Russian families and girls to join us in a few Welsh Rugby songs !!! Will every day be like this ???

MONDAY 17th October: We were invited to join a group of Russian veterans for a tour of HMS Glasgow followed by lunch in the Wardroom. A mix up in transport and other arrangements by our Consulate, meant that the Russian friends had practically completed their Glasgow tour before any of us arrived. Nevertheless a couple of very happy hours were spent on board. We were pleased to meet up with Lieutenant Commander Robin Davies, who was the Asst. Naval Attache in Moscow for a couple of years and is now nearing the end of his commission on Glasgow where he is 'Jimmy the One'. We were able to congratulate Robin on his promotion to Commander (to take effect from December). We were introduced to the Commanding Officer who invited to use HMS Glasgow as 'home' whilst we were there! During the afternoon we visited the Royal Yacht and were shown all over this wonderful vessel - yes, wonderful vessel despite her age! After this the party broke up and returned to their hotels. That is all except Shipmates Squires and Long (RCC/NRC) who met a couple of old Russian friends and departed to one of their apartments for a typical Russian meal with Blavk Vodka!! (Thanks Valantin and Anatoly.

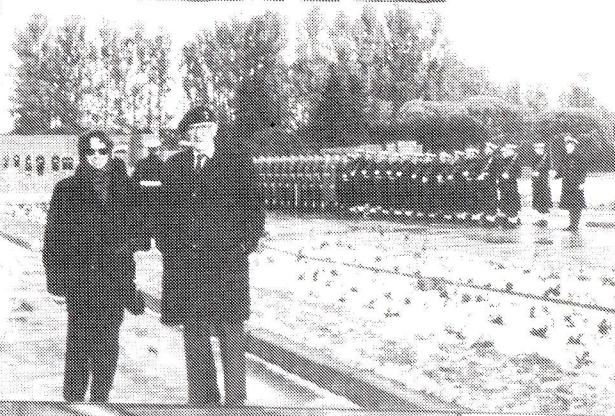
TUESDAY 18th OCTOBER: During the morning we all visited the Russian Admiralty by special invitation. The Officer in Charge lead us around the various rooms and explained everything in great detail. The visit



TOP: The Royal Yacht at St. Petersburg. 17/10/94

CENTRE: Rehearsal day at Piskarevskoye Cemetery, RN Guard of Honour from HMS GLASGOW. 19/10/94

LOWER: NRC delegation (with interpreter Anna) take over the Wardroom Bar on GLASGOW. 19/10/94



was reasonably short and enabled us to visit places of our own choice. Several of us headed directly back to our second home on board HMS Glasgow. Arriving on board we found that most of the officers were ashore on a sightseeing coach trip. However, the duty officer said, "Please use the wardroom lads, make use of the bar, but you will have to provide your own barman!" We did, but no one abused the offer, as we had an important afternoon engagement. At 1315 we left the ship on the coach carrying the ship's Guard of Honour to the rehearsal for Her Majesty's visit to the Piskaravskoye Cemetery. We went through our routine several times and decided on our Rig of the Day for when we met the Queen. It was 'Come Hell, Rain or Blizzard, it would be 'No Overcoats or Macs', extra long johns if necessary. NRC would be in blazers and flannels (except Hughie who would be in blazer & kilt.

That evening we decided to go out for a meal with Anna our interpreter guide. A fairly good meal was had at the Europa Hotel costing US\$307. When we came to pay, we were told "President Yeltsin will not allow us to accept any currency except roubles". The conversion came to 921,000 roubles. (in 1986 it was 1 rouble to the pound!!!)

WEDNESDAY 19th OCTOBER: Sqdn Ldr. Ian Barrowcliffe, the Asst. Air Attache joined us for the remainder of our visit. On behalf of us all we thank him most sincerely for his attention and friendship, it was far more than we could reasonably expect. The day was reasonably quiet, but again it included lunch aboard Glasgow, then a few beers etc. back at Nevskij Palace. During the evening TV and Radio journalist from many nations started arriving and we were kept busy - everyone was getting geared up for tomorrow.

THURSDAY 20th OCTOBER: THE BIG DAY! We were all ready bright and early. Taken by coach to the cemetery and greeted by the Director, Alexander Shoshmin. It was a beautiful day with the bright sun fairly low on the horizon. The solemn and emotional moments arrived when the Queen and President Yeltsin laid the wreaths on behalf of the nations. Then Her Majesty walked to the veterans, both British and Russian, she spent a considerable time talking to them. Dick was introduced to her and he in turn introduced each of our members. "Arn't you cold in your kilt?" she asked. Hughie's reply was "Ma'am, it is like a spring day in Aberdeen". Most of us were also able to speak to the Duke of Edinburgh, President Yeltsin, Douglas Hurd, Anatoly Adamishin, Russias new Ambassador in London and a host of other dignitaries and their ladies. It was an event that we will never forget and the happenings during the remainder of the day have faded into obscurity - except for the continuing questions from the media. Late that evening the Royal Marines Beat the Retreat on the floodlit jetty.

FRIDAY 21st OCTOBER: We were all feeling frayed at the edges and had our packing to do ready for our early evening journey by Aeroflot to Murmansk. On arrival at the Polkova 1 air terminal we were joined by the Consul General who would also remain with us for the remainder of the visit. He was able to inform us that Rear Admiral Sir Roy Newman KCB, the Flag Officer South, would arrive in Murmansk at 0200 the next morning but would only remain with us for the day. The Aeroflot was not nearly as bad as many had feared, in fact it was one of their better Murmansk flights. We were immediately taken to the Arctica Hotel where we met some of our old veteran friends and interpreters. On being allocated our rooms, all of us who had been there before were pleasantly surprised. Under a Russian Norwegian Joint Venture the hotel has been upgraded and much more like western hotels - quite

acceptable. A meal and a tot or three, then bed.

SATURDAY 22nd OCTOBER: At 0500 activity in the street awakened us, it was snow ploughs clearing the overnight snow from the rout of todays march. Next we were informed that Admiral Newman and his Flag Lieut. had arrived, but their uniforms were somewhere between Heathrow, Moscow and Murmansk - a major calamity which set alarm bells ringing.

Immediately, after breakfast we were taken to the Culture & Arts Centre where we met many friends old and young. Eventually we were singing and dancing (at 9.15 am) with the students, we danced the Russian 'Conga', we tried to sing their songs and at the end we had them singing Auld Lang Syne! Then off to the spot where we should have taken part in the first 200 metres of the long march to the Aloysha Memorial, high on the surrounding hills. Our participation in the march was cancelled because of the conditions. Indeed, the coach could not get us all the way there and after much debate we decided on a slow march-cum-stroll for the last quarter of a mile. The Aloysha events are always well supported, but undoubtedly there were even larger crowds this time, with many children there. The weather was horrible and the visibility poor. This was regrettable, as several heavy units of the Northern Fleet were anchored in the Inlet but were barely discernable from our positions. Admiral Newman was there, regrettably in civies. Then it was back to the coach and to a couple of tots, followed by lunch. The heads of the various delegations were then invited to a formal meeting in City Hall whilst others visited students at the City Institute for a concert and party. At 1730 it was all hands to the Kirov Palace of Culture for a concert. These concerts are always very enjoyable, but this one surpassed all previous ones that we had seen, having artistes from many parts of Russia. The evening was not yet over as our Russian veteran friends had arranged another party and cabaret, with plenty of vodka. We all managed to find our way back to the hotel and to bed.

SUNDAY 23rd OCTOBER: Today we had to split up, some to go to the Valley of Glory - the scene of the decisive defeat of the German Polar Army and the remainder to go down the Kola Inlet to lay wreaths and flowers at sea. Both were very moving occasions and well worth the effort - it was an effort, as our old limbs were beginning to creak a bit after the full week of activity. The day ended with a party in one of our rooms (I cannot remember who's room it was !)

But I do know that the Mayor of Tromso led the singing - some of us had met him during the cruise on MV RUSS last year.

MONDAY 24th OCTOBER: Breakfast, cases packed, many farewells in the hotel foyer and outside. Then off to the airport for the flight back to Pulkova 1 at St. Petersburg and transfer to Pulkova 2. A last meal with Ian Barrowcliffe (thanks for everything Ian) and with Anna and Anatoly there to greet us at Pulkova. Then on to the BA879 flight to Heathrow. We all thought it was finished, but not at all. The cabin crew had been alerted and the champagne and spirits flowed all the way!

WE ARE ALL ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THIS WAS THE TRIP OF OUR LIFETIME. WE ALL EXPERIENCED MANY MIXED EMOTIONS - PRIDE, HUMILITY, SORROW, ENJOYMENT and EXHAUSTION !!!

88888888888888

IMPORTANT NOTICES

MEMO FROM OUR HON. TREASURER

WILL ALL SHIPMATES PLEASE NOTE THAT MY ADDRESS IS NOW:- E.S.R.PHELPS,
12 PINE TREE CLOSE,
BURRY PORT,
(Tel:0554 835456) DYFED SA16 OTF.

IN ORDER TO SAVE POSTAGE, I HAVE NOT WRITTEN TO THANK ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SENT DONATIONS DIRECT TO ME FOR THE PARACHUTE JUMP. BUT I WOULD LIKE NOW TO EXPRESS ON BEHALF OF THE CLUB? OUR GRATEFUL THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SPONSORED EVENT.

(Signed) Ron Phelps Hon. Treasurer.

ARCTIC CAMPAIGN MEMORIAL TRUST

THE NORTH RUSSIA CLUB IS NOT PATRON OR SPONSOR OF THE ARCTIC CAMPAIGN MEMORIAL TRUST, ADVERTISEMENTS STATING THIS ARE NOT CORRECT AND HAVE BEEN MADE WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OR PERMISSION OF NORTH RUSSIA CLUB. THE TRUST HAS ENJOYED GENEROUS COVERAGE IN OUR MAGAZINE ENTIRELY FREE OF CHARGE, YET AT CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE TO THE CLUB. THIS FACILITY IS NOW WITHDRAWN.

MEMBERS WISHING TO CONTINUE THEIR SUPPORT OF THE TRUST SHOULD MAKE THEIR DONATIONS DIRECT.

R.D. Squires
R.D. SQUIRES MBE.

CROSSED THE BAR

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE FOLLOWING SHIPMATES HAVE BEEN CALLED TO HIGHER SERVICE.

K.ATMORE	of Dover	MILNE
G.BAKER	of Chichester	BEVERLEY
S.BEBBINGTON	of Manchester	NORFOLK
R.H.DUNN	of Southampton	ANSON
K.R.JONES	of Portishead	RODNEY/BERMUDA
W.J.WALDRON	of Ashford, Middlesex	TRINIDAD
R.P.WOOD	of Felpham, Bognor Regis	AMAZON
H.J.WOODMAN	of Laning, Sussex	ANSON

+++++

SAILOR WARRIOR'S LAMENT

WE PLOUGHED OUR WAY THROUGH STORMY SEAS
WHILE OCEANS EBBED AND FLOWED

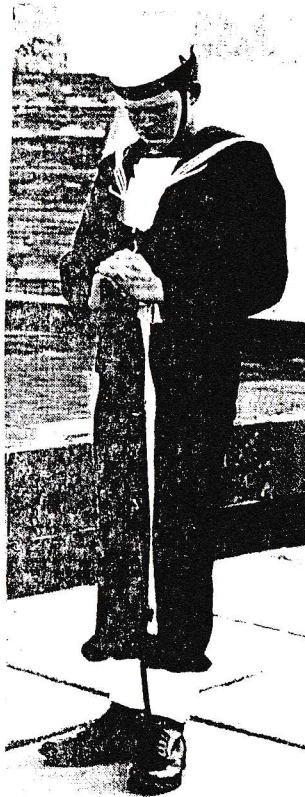
AT TIMES TO PRAY UPON OUR KNEES
ON A SOMETIMES LONELY ROAD

THE TIME HAS COME TO CHANGE OUR COURSE
FOR OUR PLACE WITH THOSE ON HIGH

CHERUBIMS AND SERAPHIMS OUR GUIDING FORCE
TILL ONE OURSELVES WITH WINGS TO FLY

NO MORE TO HEAR THE SEABIRDS CRY
OR FOLLOW A LONELY STAR

OUR SWORDS ARE CROSSED AND PUT TO LIE
IT'S TIME TO CROSS THE BAR



Fred Hardy
North Russia Club

THE MATELOT'S PUB

Vintage the 1940's
By Bill Johnston NO.40: Naval Party 100.

In any seaport worth it's name, there's one at least, it's hub.,
Where Navy men are wont to meet, it's called the matelot's pub.

The old Joanna tinkles forth, a buxom lady playing,
Topical tunes and old refrains, her music has them swaying.

The atmosphere is thick with smoke, from Jack and all his mates,
With Duty Frees and pints galore, from O.D's and Higher Rates.

Behind the bar the busy staff are serving fast, with zest,
A sailor chats the barmaid, bold, she laughs at his saucy jest.

Across the bar a sailor lone, talks to a blonde lass, bright,
An old age tale, they move away, out into the wartime night.

So long ago those distant days, Jack's tryst on his shoreward run
Where warmth and laughter waits his call, the matelots pub, great fun.

Be it Pompey, Chatham, Guzz, elsewhere, called The SHIP, the ANCHOR, whatever,
Remember still those far off haunts, in reverie yet, forever.

THE EDITOR'S FAVOURITE WATERING HOLE

Rules of the House.
The Globe Hotel, Cases Street, Liverpool

- NO Thieves, Fakirs, Rogues or Tinkers
- NO Skulking Loafers or Flea-bitten Tramps
- NO Slap or Tickle of the Wenches
- NO Banging of Tankards on the Table
- NO Dogs allowed in the Kitchen
- NO Cock Fighting

Flintlocks, Cudgels, Daggers and Swords to be handed to the
Innkeeper for safe keeping
Bed for the night One Shilling
Stabling the horse Fourpence

A.D. 1736

CHIEFIE'S CABOOSE

By Geoff Shelton

When I saw Jack Kettle's cartoon in Northern Light No 37, it brought back vivid memories, to the extent I'm sure he must have served aboard VINDEX and witnessed the following scene.

In the middle of the Seaman's messdeck was an office which was used by a Chief Petty Officer. I will not reveal the purpose for which that office was intended, for to do so would identify the Chief concerned, probably to his embarrassment.

Now this Chief had what one might say a reputation for the ladies, you get my drift. One day when anchored at Tail o' the Bank a young and attractive Wren was escorted to the aforesaid office and introduced to the Chief. The Chief's eyes lit up, the escort departed, she was then ushered into the office and the door firmly closed.

A silence had descended on the mess as this apparition of feminine beauty passed the host of love starved, open mouthed and boggle eyed sailors and entered the office. Each matelot indulged in their own flights of fancy as to what was happening.

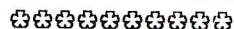
Someone in a loud whisper said, "Turn off the ventilator motors and we can hear what's going on". "Better still" said another "when the motor is off we can stick our ears against the vent as it passes through the office". As the motor droned to a stop a rush was made to climb onto the tables and benches, each one having his own listening device as ears were pressed against air vents.

It soon became apparent what type of business the Chief had his mind on, because we heard little innuendoes to test the young lady's reaction, followed by suggestions, followed by

The lads took in every word that was uttered and imagined every sound. Safety valves were at dangerous levels as we all endeavoured to suppress the need to spoil their fun. But someone had to give vent to their feelings, there's always one - this time it was 'Horse' O'Reilly. He put his mouth to the air vent and yelled "You dirty b.....!"

When they came out of the office they both looked rather sheepish. The Wren was blushing heavily as she smoothed down her skirt, while Chiefie gave a guilty smile. They then had to pass through an avenue of grinning matelots.

Such happy, happy memories!!



SICK VISITORS

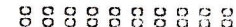
WE STILL REQUIRE MORE VOLUNTEERS TO ACT AS SICK VISITORS IN THE IMMEDIATE LOCALITY OF THEIR HOMES - WILL YOU HELP?

Please send your names to the Hon. Secretary or Welfare Officer.

A SAILOR'S LOVE

*The night was wet and windy, the stormy skies were cleft,
A sailor boy stood on the quay, with only tuppence left.
His sweetheart there beside him, her silent tears she hid,
And as she gazed into his eyes, he tapped her for a Quid.
"Be brave my love" he said to her, "this parting brings me grief,
I'll give you back the Quid I owe, the day they make me Chief".*

ANON



D - DAY + 50 YEARS
Austin Byrne, Marion and Emma.

Up early and go to church. Not many there, but all oldies like us.

Back home, the lady in charge says, "Let's put the flag up", 2 year old Emma and I do as we are told.

I rig the pole, Emma thinks its all good fun as she hoists the flag, then tries to catch it as it waves.

Feeling as if I was in charge, I said to Emma, "Splice the Mainbrace", but she did not understand. So I said "Stand Easy", her eyes rolled, you could see her thinking "What's up with him?"

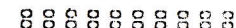
The young girl moves fast, shouting "Marmar, Stand Easy". Chocolate drops follow and she probably thinks "I'll get another out of him today".

Then I pour a Brandy for Marion and a Whisky for me, the bottle slips and we toast "Absent Friends".

Later, Emma did flash her red hair and blue eyes, and take me by the hand to the bell, and say "Austin, Stand Easy".

Yes, it was a good day for us, but FREEDOM did not come cheap, and thanks to them, we are still the

LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY



COLONEL SINKS IN QUICKSAND

From "Callan's Week" of the Daily Express, Saturday July 30.

The Royal Tournament - all that exhausting gun dismantling, my dears - has thundered on this week. Driving by Earls Court stadium (it creaks on), I was reminded of a Press luncheon I once attended there. That year, An Italian Army team took part and present was a sleek colonel from Milan, and his swarthy adjutant, both of whom were dressed like cinema commissionaires. Sitting nearby was a red-faced, retired British major and (as it turned

out) Old Desert Rat. At one point, the Italian colonel while he and his men were honoured to take part, they usually performed their ornate drill on concrete. "We are not used to running on sand," he complained.

At this point, the Desert Rat turned purple and boomed; "What? Can't run on sand? You didn't do too badly in Benghazi in '42!"

Exit one Colonel.



ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

Reported by Les Sullivan

Saturday 22nd October saw the Tenth Annual Dinner Dance at The Swallow Hotel, Eagle Drive, Northampton.

Although the attendance was just slightly down on the 1993 event the enthusiasm and enjoyment left nothing to be desired.

"The order "UP SPIRITS" was proclaimed by our Patron, Admiral Bruce Richardson, CB. This set the mood for what was to be a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Following an excellent dinner, 'real' dance music was provided by "Tempo Tyme" and there was no shortage of participants on the dance floor.

In a short speech, which was in reply to the President, our Patron made reference to the absence of the Chairman, Dick Squires, who he said was "On a State Visit to Russia ably assisted by Her Majesty the Queen". He went on to say how delighted he and his partner, Ms. Kitty Barclay, were to be present, and he expressed his pride and pleasure to be associated with the North Russia Club.

Considering the average age, it must be said that the enthusiasm and energy, plus the stamina of the NRC members is something to marvel at - when I finally left the bar at 0155 on Sunday morning, I was nowhere near the last!

LES JONES, WHO ORGANISED THE EVENT, IS TO BE CONGRATULATED ON ANOTHER HUGE SUCCESS.

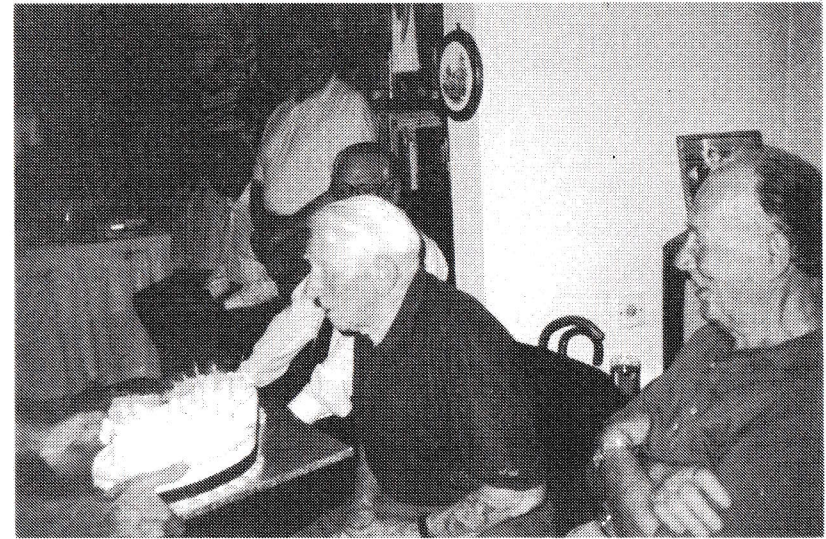
8888888888888888

1. Horatio Lord Nelson - at the Battle of Trafalgar.
2. Sir Francis Drake.
3. Earl Beatty - at the Battle of Jutland, when three capital ships were lost in a short time.
4. Thucydides - Greek Historian.
5. Captain Lawrence Oats - Last words in Scott's Last Expedition 1913 - Scott's diary entry 16/17 March 1912.
6. Winston Churchill - later changed (by Ratings) to "Rum Bum and Baccy". In 1994 the tot is no more and smoking is discouraged!
7. Winston Churchill.
8. Signals exchanged by the Admirals of the American Fleet and Admiral Mountbatten the Commander-in-Chief of the Med. Fleet.
9. Signals exchanged between Commander of R.N. Submarine and Commander Jack Broome in HMS KEPPEL, during an Arctic Convoy.
10. Francis Bacon.

ANSWERS

AROUND THE MEMBERSHIP .. WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

HASTINGS AREA Reported by Lance Tyler: The oldest member in our area, Harry Holewell, celebrated his 90th birthday on 20 August. Harry's family had arranged a surprise party at his son's home, to which they invited Harry's N.R.C. clubmates. Seven members attended and Harry was presented with a special North Russia Club birthday card signed by them all, as well as a book on Ships of the Royal Navy 1920 to 1929. which was most appropriate as Harry joined the Andrew in 1920. Lance Tyler says, "We consider ourselves to be extremely lucky to have such a wonderful comradeship in the Hastings area of our unique club and long may it be so. We now look forward to Harry's 100th birthday!!



Harry still had plenty of 'Puff' at cake-cutting time!

SOUTH WALES AREA Members and friends held a very enjoyable re-union get-together at Neath Constitutional Club on Saturday 3 September. Mervyn Williams the organiser, has asked me to express the thanks of the participants to the club officials for making them so welcome. Thanks also for their generous donation. The next reunion at the Neath Constitutional Club on 25 March 1995. £8.00 per head - details from E.M.Williams, 87 Olive Road, Cxford, Southampton.

LETTERS FROM NON-MEMBERS

From Cmdr. J Goldsmith RN (Rtd): Commander Binney described the method of preparing, from solid blocks of chocolate, that "gruesome brew" known in the Royal Navy as "kye". This duty fell to the midshipman of the watch.

One less than popular senior lieutenant commander in the old battleship QUEEN ELIZABETH demanded kye, good and strong, every quarter of an hour. If it was not to his liking a replacement was ordered.

I remember making kye for him throughout one middle watch, using a laxative made to taste like chocolate. In his sixteen mugs of this elixer he consumed a bar and a half.

Leaving the bridge he said to me: "Good brew, Mid, keep it up." That was the last we midshipmen saw of him of him for three days.

o o o o o o o o o o

From Douglas Cole of Great Yarmouth: Referring to SS NEW WESTMINSTER CITY on Page 27 of the latest Northern Light in the late 1940's I was working on Cardiff Docks and a ship arrived to be berthed at the Mount Steward Dry Dock. This ship had been damaged on a Russian Convoy and later was sunk in Russian waters. The Russians had raised her and, apparently, as part of the reparations agreements had sailed her back to her home port of Cardiff. (I believe she was part of the Reardon Smith Line ... all their ship names ended in CITY)! I went on board her and how that Russian crew had managed to get that ship to U.K. waters was little short of a miracle those Russian seamen were damn good seafarers.

o o o o o o o o o o

Another new book: "TAG ON A STRINGBAG" by Les Sayer and Vernon Ball. Published by Aspen Publications Ltd., Cefn Ydfa, The Cliff, Borth, Dyfed SY24 5NN. 340 pages 34 photographs. "TAG ON A STRINGBAG" is a collection of reminiscences written by those Telegraphist Air Gunners who survived to tell the tale. Some of their stories are amusing, some terrifying, some wistful, and every one is a good read.

The Fairey Swordfish, christened the Stringbag from the multiplicity of stay wires holding it together and for its amazing capacity to carry everything in the way of surplus luggage, from bicycles to beer barrels, was, despite its leisurely progress through the air, the most popular aircraft with the crews. She absorbed punishment, forgave mistakes and had a capacity for survival that was unequalled. Those who flew in them loved them dearly.
Price U.K.£15.00

o o o o o o o o o o

From the N.Z.Convoy Club's newsletter to the Editor of North Russia Club's "Northern Light": please copy for your members 'info'

HMS NORFOLK'S WALRUS

Over many years now there has appeared articles re NORFOLK's Walrus, and, each time it is said that the "Walrus" was towed by PALOMARES first to Novaya Zemlya and then to Archangel. Let me put the record straight at Matochkin Shar my ship OCEAN FREEDOM, coaled one or two of the trawlers as they were out of bunkers. After this operation was completed, the Walrus which had been towed over to us by one of the Trawlers, was lifted aboard and placed on top of number 3 hatch, wings folded back and with either depth charges or smoke flares under each wing. She was then taken to Archangel and unloaded at Bakeritza. As we were moored ahead of PALOMARES and POZARICA at the time, this is probably why people think that PALOMARES towed her to Archangel.....LHDAB.

From Arthur Holliday: Reference N.Light June 1994 "A PLEASURE CRUISE" by G.L.Eddis: I served as a P.O.Writer with Captain J.H.F. Crombie D.S.O., R.N. on H.M.S.BRAMBLE for two years. Could I please put the record straight. BRAMBLE did not disappear and lose the Convoy PQ2. EXTRACT FROM THE SHIP'S LOG:-1735 21st October 1941. Steering engine broke down, took up position astern of convoy and steered by main engines.0050 22nd October 1941. Repairs completed, took up position at head of Convoy.

From S.J.Haskell, D.S.M: Ref article on Captain Sakarov, I was on BRYONY during that trip (PQ18), my rating was Stoker P.O., a breed I believe now extinct in this modern navy. However, reading the article I realised it was the STALINGRAD I watched on that fateful day. I had the morning watch, so I had breakfast after the usual cup of tea and Woodbine, and later was up top leaning on the guard rail with a mate, watching the world go by. The sea was calm and all was quiet, then suddenly, pure luck, we were looking at this ship, and it looked as though someone was shaking the funnel violently, a large smoke ring appeared and then a large water spout appeared at the stern. Something large and black came out of the water, spinning and went higher than the spout, still spinning. We realised it was the prop. and it eventually spun back into the sea. Other ships went to the rescue, but we carried on our course, action stations of course, as we were mother to two submarines. Later : that day all hell broke loose, as has already been written about.

From J.R.S. White: I have often wondered why member's rank or rating is not mentioned in the Lists of New Members etc. I would think it would make members more easy to identify - I mean, there are hundreds of 'Knobby' Clarks, and 'Knocker' Whites. I was lucky, being 'Toothy' White ! There is probably some very good reason, but I cannot think what. Chairman/Editor's reply: The answer is simply that when the club was formed, it was felt that all members would be equal and that the only exceptions should be the club's top dignitaries, i.e. Patron, etc. So whether you were a Captain or an Ordinary Seaman, a Chief Engineer or a Galley Boy - you are now, quite simply 'A Shipmate'. But further to this short letter, let us draw up a list of unusual nicknames. Send them to the editor with, if possible the reasoning behind them - could make interesting and amusing reading..

A LAUGH (OR TWO) FOR CHRISTMAS



"We'll try it again shall we -
they're ALL portholes,
there are no starboard holes..."



CANADIAN CORVETTES. Alan Turner, C.D., NRC No 284, HMCS NENE.

Dear Editor, Hi Dick!

How goes the conflicting evidence battle? I refer to the article and letters on corvettes and their launching dates and submit the following.

From the book "Corvettes of the Royal Canadian Navy" 1939-1945 by Ken MacPherson and Mark Milner - pages 97 and 100.

HMCS COLLINGWOOD (K180) was first Canadian Corvette launched on 27 July 1940 and commissioned 9 Nov 1940 to 23 July 1945. Her fo'c'sle was extended in New York in 1943.

From the same book, HMCS EDMUNDSON (K106) was launched on 22 Feb 1941. Her fo'c'sle was extended in Halifax in 1943.

Of the COLLINGWOOD launch I can add further proof, as my father was General Superintendent of the Collingwood Shipyard at the time and I an apprentice electrician at the time. I have pictures of the launching.

For further information HMCS SACKVILLE (K181) launched in St. John, New Brunswick 15 May 1941, is the only Canadian Corvette in original appearance afloat today. She is on permanent display at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

All HMCS NENE members of NRC thoroughly enjoy receiving "Northern Light" as I am sure all overseas members do.

What Naval plans are in the making for the 50th Anniversary of VE Day in Britain next year? A great chance for some of us to come over "one more time!"

.....

CALLING NAVAL PARTY 200 - SOS - MAYDAY.

Calling old shipmates who were with the British Naval Mission, otherwise known as Naval Party 200 in Archangel in North Russia. I am particularly interested in those who served there during 1944/1945 and especially those who closed the Mission down and sailed for U.K. on October 12th, 1945.

We were there as a back up to the Russian Convoys and liaised with the Soviet Authorities.

I returned to Archangel in Aug/Sept. 1991 with the North Russia Club and the Russian Convoy Club. Also in the party was Ron Phelps from NP200 in 1944/45.

It will be 50 years next year and I would like to locate as many of my old shipmates as possible to organise a reunion.

JIM MATHEWSON (NRC No 31) Tel:0268 733133.

.....

THE REAL COLD WAR featuring JACK IN JOE'S LAND By our President Chris B Tye

Publication Date March 1995

Price £19.95 plus £3.75 p & p.

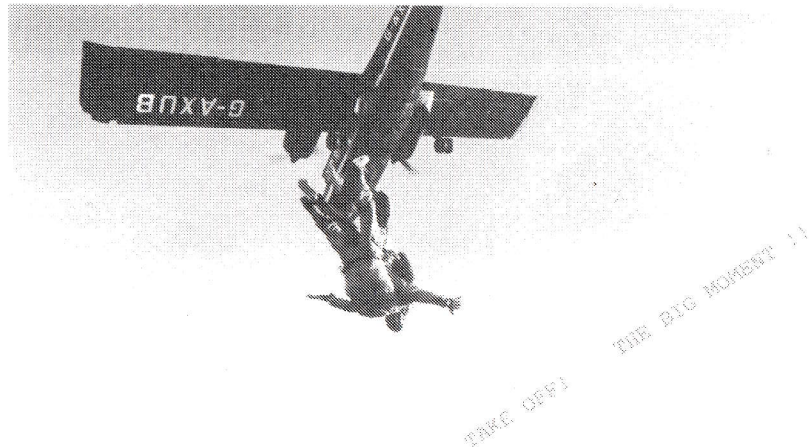
SPECIAL PRE PUBLICATION OFFER TO NRC MEMBERS

£15.00 per copy plus £3.75 p & p

THE SPONSORED PARACHUTE JUMP

At Headcorn Airfield in Kent, on Sunday October 9th, GUS BRITTON, (Membership No 1476) aged 72, jumped from 11,300 feet in a sponsored parachute jump to raise finance for North Russia Club's Welfare Fund. The jump was witnessed by a small group of club members including the President and Chairman. **ALL MONEY RAISED IS INTENDED TO BE USED ON, OR FOR OUR DISTRESSED MEMBERS - NOT ON BRICKS AND MORTAR MEMORIALS ! THIS IS THE SPECIFIC WISH OF GUS BRITTON.**

Have you sponsored the Jump yet? All donations, no matter how small or large, should be sent to Gus Britton, c/o Submarine Museum, HMS Dolphin, Gosport, Hants PO2 2AS. **CHEQUES MADE PAYABLE TO "NORTH RUSSIA CLUB PARAJUMP APPEAL"** All sponsors will receive a postcard photo of Gus in flight as a receipt.



GUS BRITTON: Joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman in 1938. he served on ION DUKE, then on NELSON he was aboard her at sea, on the day war broke out and was still aboard when she was mined. His next ship was FIJI, he joined her one day and was torpedoed the next! Then he was drafted to a four-funnelled Yank, BEVERLEY for Atlantic Convoys. He transferred to the submarine service on April Fool's Day 1941 until 1953. He was on TRIBUNE which was one of the covering submarines for PQ17 and PQ18.

Gus, now aged 72, said that "parachuting is a piece of cake". Six years ago he swam to the Isle of Wight and back from Gosport, to raise funds for the Submarine Old Comrades Association. **WHAT WILL HE DO NEXT ? WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT ? WILL YOU SPONSOR HIM ?**

From those who witnessed the jump "Gus, we did love your parachute - such colours - Electric Green and Shocking Pink !!!!

8888888888

FORTHCOMING EVENTS, TOURS & REUNIONS

WED 7 DEC. 1994: "OGGIE LAND" CHRISTMAS LUNCH in Senior Rates Mess at HMS DRAKE. £15.00 per person. Book with Peter Skinner, please state car registration, make and colour when booking.

SUN 11 DEC. 1994: "MERSEYSIDE CHRISTMAS PARTY" in Senior Rates Mess at HMS EAGLET: £3.00 per person. Book with Dick Squires before 7 December.

SAT 25 MARCH 1995: SOUTH WALES REUNION at Neath Constitutional Club. £8.00 per person. Buffet, music etc. Guests welcome. Apply to Mervyn Williams - address inside front cover.

SAT 6 MAY 1995: SOUTHERN REUNION at HMS NELSON, Portsmouth - £10.00 per person. Book with Mervyn Williams.

SAT 6 TO SAT 13 MAY 1995: JERSEY LIBERATION & VICTORY CELEBRATIONS at Westhill Hotel, St Helier, C.I. Book with Les Sullivan - almost full already, so dont delay.

FRI 5 TO SUN 14 MAY 1995: TOUR TO ST PETERSBURG and MURMANSK - Celebrate Victory Day at Murmansk and Polyarnoe. Book with Peter Skinner or Dick Squires.

THUR 25 TO SUN 28 MAY 1995: 52ND REUNION OF SCHARNHORST ASSOCIATION at Bad-Harzberg. Further details can be obtained from Wolfgang Kube, 56075 Koblenz, Naumburger Strasse 16, Germany. or immediate details from Tom Bethell, (NRC No 1300).

FRI 30 JUNE to MON 3 JULY 1995: HMCS "NENE" BI-ENNIAL REUNION BANQUET WEEK-END INCORPORATING "CANADA DAY" at Peterborough, near Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The reunion weekend and banquet is 90 dollars per person. Booking forms available. Venue: HOLIDAY INN, PETERBOROUGH. En-suite; all facilities, Pool, Leisure Centre, etc. 69 Dollars per night; 79 dollars on Lakeside.

Transport available from Toronto Airport to Venue.

ITINERARY:

FRI 30 JUNE: Reception and Registration with Buffet 1800 to 2300.

SAT 1 JULY: Luncheon Cruise, followed by Canada Day Celebrations

SUN 2 JULY: Coach Tour, relaxation period prior to Banquet Reception 1800 for 1900.

MON 3 JULY: Farewell Breakfast.

Special reduced air fares being negotiated. ALL enquiries to our President Chris Tye, please.

A STAMPED AND ADDRESSED ENVELOPE WILL BE APPRECIATED WITH ALL ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS.

SLOPS (Revised Prices)

TIES (Printed motif).....	£7.50
Blazer Badges.....	£9.50
N.R.C. Enamelled Brooches.....	£3.50
UK/Russia Lapel Badges.....	£1.75
Blue Nose Certificates.....	£6.50
Medal Holders (Plastic).....	£2.25
Beret Badges.....	£5.25
Wall Banners (Silk).....	£6.75
Windscreen Stickers.....	3 for £1.00
Key Cases (Leather with Gold N.R.C. Logo).....	£2.75
Coasters (Blue or Maroon).....	Box of 4 £3.35
Books. "Convoys to Russia 1941-1945".....	£10.75
Miniature Russian Commemorative Medal.....	£9.50
White or Red Ensign Lapel Badges.....	£1.75
Christmas Cards "Belfast/Standard (Pack 12)".....	£2.00
Christmas Cards as advertised on pages 4/5.....	£2.00

PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE AND PACKING

Cheques made payable to "NORTH RUSSIA CLUB"

To S/M Sid Bateaman, 70 Nickleby House, All Saints Rd.,
Portsmouth PO1 4EL.

Overseas members are requested to remit in Sterling and add
additional postage.

.....

A FRIEND IS A FRIEND

Friendship is a precious gem
That cant be bought with gold
But it's found along the road of life
Where we pass but once ...we're told

So, when friends depart for far away places
We are sad to see them go
But friendship spans those distant spaces
And fond memories soften the blow

C.A. (Pete) BURKE
Signalman ASNAG

⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘

One night the Officer of the Watch sent the Bridge Messenger to get him a mug of Kie from the Galley. On his return the O.O.W. noted that the messenger's dirty thumb was hooked over the brim of the mug and partialy immersed.

He said "My man, you have your thumb in my cocoa"
"That's alright, sir", replied the messenger, "It aint hot".

⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘ ⊘