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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH RUSSIA CLUB

3/91

NORTHERN LIGHT N° 23.



"NORTHERN LIGHT" SALUTES OUR AMERICAN ALLIES,
PARTICULARLY THE VETERANS OF THE
U.S.NAVY ARMED GUARD & U.S.MERCHANT MARINE.
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I was pleased with the number of contributors who were able to let me have material for the last edition of Northern Light, and as you will see from the following pages, this trend has continued. Please keep up the good work, for the wider our interests are spread, the better will be the quality of our magazine.

The "O" Boat theme in the last edition created a lot of interest and I received several more articles for future use, but you "O" lads are now at the back of the queue and will eventually get another turn on the duty roster. I feel sure that the "American" theme in the first half of this edition will also create the same interest - judge for yourselves. It certainly gave me many hours of interesting reading and typing. I offer sincere thanks to all contributors, particularly to Charles A Lloyd of the U.S.Navy Armed Guard, Bill Ryan of the U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans and Ian Millar of Trident Archives. Excerpts from the book "Unsung Sailors" by Justin F. Gleichauf are also acknowledged. We have a copy of this book in the library - members may borrow this providing they pay the postal charges.

What about future themes? In June we want stories from nearer home. What happened to you whilst in Scapa or Iceland? (I got drunk in Scapa, missed the liberty boat and tried walking on water! (I'm still practicing!!) An account of the long train journey from Guzz or Pompey to the Scrabster ferry, something that happened off Spitzbergen, Jan Meyen or Lofoten? You've got the stories and we want them. Then, as late August sees the 50th Anniversary of the start of the Kola Run, so the theme in September's magazine will be 'The Early Convoys' i.e. Dervish; PQ 1; PQ 2; PQ 3 and the return voyages. It's not too early to start writing.

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INTERNATIONAL REUNION

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At a recent committee meeting of your Committee, it was decided that instead of the now almost routine visits to the U.S.S.R., there should be held an INTERNATIONAL REUNION in this country.

It will be open to all Arctic Campaign veterans of whatever nationality, and will include Soviet Veterans from Murmansk, Scharnhorst survivors, German U-boat and JU.88 Veterans, American Armed Guard and Merchant seaman and many others. Commencing in Glasgow and Clydeside, the Reunion will move to Liverpool and the Western Approaches, and then move on to the South of England for London and Portsmouth. At each venue Coach Tours, sightseeing trips, and Dinners/Banquets will be arranged, and will be organised in such a way that veterans can participate in all or selected events to suit their individual tastes. The dates selected are: 2nd to 12th July 1992.

It should be noted that 4th July - American Independence Day is also the 50th anniversary of PQ.17. The Reunion Committee is: Chairman Ernie Skelton, Secretary Peter Skinner and Don Allen. Arthur Willis will help with Southern arrangements. The club Chairman, Hon.Secretary and Hon.Treasurer are ex-officio members. Further volunteers will be required in Glasgow etc. - you will be kept informed.

Peter A Skinner, Reunion Secretary (0237 431481)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Have you paid your subscription? It is £6.00 per year and became due on 1st March. If you joined recently (Membership N° 1128) onwards you are exempt. Send your cheque, made payable to North Russia Club, to L.A.Sullivan, 2 Broadlawn, Woolavington, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 8EP.



REUNIONS & SOCIALS

SATURDAY 23rd MARCH: Dinner Dance at the Stretton Hotel, The Promenade, Blackpool Dinner £10.00 per person. B.& B. £16.00 Single. £16.50 Twin/Double with Bath/Shr. Telephone Les Jones 0257 791632: Stretton Hotel 0253 25688 Hurry-Hurry-Hurry!!!!

WEDNESDAY 17th APRIL: South West Members & Ladies Annual Dinner at The Keyford Arms Hotel, Locks Hill, Frome, Somerset. 7.30 for 8.00pm. Price £8.00 per person. This venue is filling up quickly so phone 'Curley' Morris 0373 64723 for booking.

4th to 11th MAY: Annual visit to Murmansk - see separate item:

5th to 12th MAY: A letter from N.R.C. member Bob Smale:-

WESTHILL HOTEL, JERSEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS:

Dear N.R.C.Member, The club has arranged a re-union at the West Hill Hotel from the 5th to 12th May 1991, as printed in the last edition of Northern Light.

In case anyone missed the announcement, I am writing to you in the hope, that you may be able to accept this invitation. A programme is being finalised, and will be distributed in due course. Depends on numbers really.

I have an active interest in running the hotel, and I wish to assure you of our utmost endeavours to make your stay an enjoyable one, in what I am sure will be a most pleasant atmosphere.

With very best wishes, Yours sincerely,

Bob Smale N.R.C.Member 886.

Contact Ray Jarrett, Bonnes Vacances Ltd., 9 Charing Cross St.Hellier,C.I.

Tel: 0534 68885.

SATURDAY 11th May: Southern Reunion at The Royal Sailors Home Club, Portsmouth. Buffet Dance Tickets £11.00 per head. Contact Mervyn Williams, 87 Olive Road, Southampton SO1 6FT (Tel:0703 775875) for booking and details of accomodation.

FRIDAY 12th to SUNDAY 14th JULY: LONDON WEEKEND: Friday night at Royal Tournament, Saturday Afternoon Annual General Meeting, Saturday Evening Buffet Dance at the Victory Services Club, Marble Arch; Sunday Morning, Wreath Laying at Brookwood Cemetery Russian Memorial followed by Buffet Lunch at the Sergeants Mess, Pirbright Camp by permission of the Brigade of Guards. Booking Forms will be available when Royal Tournament discounted prices are known. But get your name on the Mailing List. Buffet Dance forms from Ernie Skelton (Tel 0304 202704) other events from Dick Squires (Tel:051 487 9567).

SEE PAGE 35 FOR FURTHER EVENTS including Tours to U.S.S.R.

U.S.S. REUBEN JAMES.

THE SINKING THAT ALMOST STARTED THE WAR

FOR OUR ALLIES BEFORE PEARL HARBOUR.

The Memoirs of Erich Topp, commander of U-57 and U-552,
as told to Harry Cooper.

Let me report on one attack that had a deep effect on my life when it occurred and that is touching me even today - the sinking of U.S.S. REUBEN JAMES.

The incident had a political and moral dimension. Let me quote the war diary of Admiral Donitz for the morning of October 31, 1941:

"The British convoy HX156 escorted by five destroyers was sighted by U-552; the Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Topp sank on the position 51.59N, 27.05W the American destroyer REUBEN JAMES at 8.34."

The political dimension: Hitler in his book Mein Kampf had already hinted at his intentions of expansion. After taking power he started to realise this intention and prepared for war. Hitler was prudent enough not to provoke the United States. Indeed he accepted provocation from Roosevelt as follows:

September 1940 - US handed over 50 destroyers to Britain.

March 1941 - Lend Lease Act. That meant delivery of weapons to Britain without paying.

April 1941 - The 300 mile security zone was enlarged to 30 deg W - that is the middle of the Atlantic. Within this zone US warships shadowed German merchant ships until they were taken over by British warships. From this time also, US warships were escorting British convoys in the Western hemisphere.

On April 10 the destroyer USS Niblack attacked a German submarine.

On July 7 Iceland was occupied by US troops, so becoming a US naval base.

On September 4 after attack and counter-attack between the destroyer USS GREER and a German submarine, Secretary of the Navy, Mr Knox gave the order to all US naval forces to attack and destroy German "pirates" as he called German Navy ships.

Compared with this "short-of-war" policy of Roosevelt's, the German conduct of naval warfare had been rather reserved. Then came October 31, 1941 and the sinking of REUBEN JAMES by U-552.

In the early twilight and as I saw it, it was a British escort, but we very soon knew by radio that we had attacked a destroyer of a non-belligerent country:

The entry of the United States in the First World War as a consequence of the intensified submarine warfare, came at once into my mind and I realised the significance of sinking the REUBEN JAMES.

From the aspect of international law everything was OK as I had attacked an enemy escort. Nevertheless it was evident that I had involuntarily intervened in history. After reaching our destination port, I had to rush to Berlin to report to the Naval High Command.

One month later Japan entered the war, attacking the US fleet in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. But even today the sinking of REUBEN JAMES must be seen in connection with the move of the US to war.

On a motion of President Roosevelt, the US Congress on November 13 - that is 14 days after the attack - voted for the arming of US merchant ships, thus exploiting the atmosphere of public opinion after the sinking of REUBEN JAMES.

You remember perhaps the song of the REUBEN JAMES, written by Woody Guthrie and sung by the American people all over the country?

"Have you heard of the good ship called the good Reuben James, manned by hard fighting men, both of honor and fame. She flew the Stars and Stripes of the Land of the Free, but tonight she's in her grave at the bottom of the sea.

"It was there in the dark of that uncertain night that we watched for the U-boats and waited for the fight. Then the fire and the rocket and the great explosion roared. They laid the Reuben James on the cold ocean floor.

"Now tonight there are lights in our country so bright; in the farms and in the cities, they are telling of the fight. And now our mighty battleships will steam the bounding main and remember the name, that good Reuben James.

"Tell me what were there names, tell me what were there names? Did you have a friend on the good Reuben James?"

With a vote of Congress on November 13, 1941, the Neutrality Act was abandoned; the decision for war was de facto accomplished.

Historically, it was proved that the sinking of the REUBEN JAMES in this critical phase of the political process of the eve of war, gave good headlines for the press campaign and was politically exploited.

What about the moral dimension? From the bridge of the boat we saw protected by the low visibility in the dawn about 100 metres away after launching two torpedoes an explosion followed by a second gigantic detonation caused by the ready depth charges.

After the many attacks that we had suffered, I confess that we were satisfied to have destroyed one of our arch-enemies, not knowing what had really happened on the REUBEN JAMES.

Now I quote from the American book 'Roosevelt's War:'

"The explosion broke the spine of the REUBEN JAMES and she cleaved in two. Up forward, a chief who was moving up a ladder to the bridge, was blown clear of the ship and the quartermaster was blown from the helm through the top of the wheelhouse, which opened up like the petals of a flower.

"Over the fiery bridge and into the sea, everyone else in the forward part of the ship including Tex Edwards, young Craig Bowers and every other officer was killed almost immediately by the blast, fire and onrushing sea. The forward part of the ship sank in the smoke and steam; the men aft had more chance.

"Seaman Dan DiRagusa was asleep in his bunk when the force of the explosion flung him to the deck. Bent lockers were on their side, and bunks and mattresses were crisscrossed in a tangled shambles in the narrow passageway.

"He grabbed at his life jacket, but it was pinned under twisted beams so he left it and struggled through wreckage up to the main deck. Topside, flames burned across metal surfaces, feeding on paint; ruptured fuel tanks spewed thick black oil into the water.

"The stern was settling; Daren Cresel did not have to dive overboard; he merely stepped off the deck into the sea. Some men did not make it to the rafts. They suffocated in the oil, or died of their wounds and burns. And a few drowned. The bodies of the dead bobbed inertly on the black swells; it was quiet on the water.

"The survivors watched from on and around their rafts as the sea gurgled obnoxiously over the stern section of the ship. Then from inside the destroyer came the screams of wounded or dazed men who had not been noticed amid the tangle of wreckage and were now drowning at the stern as the stern sank.

"Soon it was quiet again as the stern went under and the exhausted men

on the rafts struggled with fatigue and fear to obtain initiative and give direction and coherence to the thus far random efforts of survival.

"Suddenly several of the destroyer's ready depth charges exploded and the sea erupted in a huge showering blast. As fireman Carl remembered there was a blinding flash - it felt like I was swimming, then I realised I couldn't feel any water under me. I turned head down about 25 metres above the water!"

"Men still clinging to the rafts were dazed, covered with sticky, slippery oil. They found it difficult to climb back on board or even maintain their hold. Sailors in the water were bleeding from mouths, noses, ears - it was getting harder to tell the living from the dead sometimes.

"Men holding on to the side of a raft lost their grip and slid under. It was still dark and hard to see when the men drowned and the survivors - sick, stunned and exhausted lacked the strength to swim after the splashing sounds."

The destroyer USS NIBLACK did the rescue operation. Only 35 men were saved, more than 130 died on the bitter cold Halloween morning.

In 1962 I was invited for lunch onboard a landing ship docked in San Diego. The Commanding Officer sent a boat and received me with normal ceremony. He had been Watch Officer on the USS NIBLACK and tried to find his best friend, a Watch Officer on the REUBEN JAMES, in vain.

Talking with him, listening to his words that described the rescue action, the search for his friend:

"The sea and the twilight covered with oil strewn with debris and human beings, a scenario like Dante's Hell I shall never forget.

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"PERESTROIKA"

By Reginald Rinder, Florida U.S.A.

Dear Folks,

I thought that the Russian Humor as typified by the anecdote quoted below was just too good not to share with you which is the reason for this note.

A guy walks into a Moscow bar and orders a beer. "One rouble" says the bartender. "What" the man protests. "Last week it cost only 50 kopecks!" "Well 50 kopecks is for the beer and 50 kopecks is for perestroika" said the bartender.

When the customer hands over the rouble, the bartender gave him back 50 kopecks and said "we're out of beer"!!!

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S.S. "JEFFERSON MYERS"

Rough Log of Ed. W. Edwards of San Diego.

18 July 1942. Transferred from U.S.S.MELVILLE to S.S. JEFFERSON MYERS at Hvalfjordur Bay, Iceland.
4 Aug. " Sailed for Loch Long, Scotland. Arrived 8 Aug.
9 Oct. " Sailed for Bangor, N.Ireland, arrived same day.
22 Oct. " Sailed for Orkneys, arrived Kirkwall 24 Oct.
13 Nov. " Sailed for Leith, Scotland, arrived 14 Nov.
21 Nov. " Sailed for London. Arrived 23 Nov. Drydocked.
12 Dec. " Sailed from London. E-boats attacked till dawn. 5 ships blown up or sunk.
13 Dec. " Arrived Hull, England. Took on additional cargo.
16 Dec. " Sailed for Methil, Scotland. Arrived 17 Dec.
19 Dec. " Sailed for Loch Ewe. Arrived 21 Dec.
22 Dec. " Sailed for North Russia in Convoy JW51B.
26 Dec. " (Not sure of date). Severe storm - steering gear problem, became separated from convoy.
31 Dec. " German and British cruisers and destroyers battle. Observed one blown up. Deck engineer dies. Later found out that H.M.S.ACHATES was sunk, H.M.S.ONSLow damaged. Germans lost one destroyer and one large warship badly damaged.
2 Jan. 1943. German plane circled ship, we thought it was Russian. We followed course indicated by plane.
? Jan. " Sighted land. Two planes came out. A Russian destroyer located us and fired on the planes - the land was German occupied Finland.
? Jan. " Entered White Sea. Stuck in Ice.
? Jan. " Russian ice breaker takes us through White Sea.
6 Jan. " Arrived Molotovsk, U.S.S.R.
13 Jan. " Sailed from Molotovsk through White Sea.
19 Jan. " Arrived Murmansk. Bombed regularly.
28 Feb. " Planes attacked while in small boat obtaining stores from another ship.
1 Mar. " Convoy left Murmansk.
5 Mar. " Sub fired 3 torpedoes from inside convoy. S.S.EXECUTIVE hit aft, S.S.RICHARD BLAND hit on Stb.bow. EXECUTIVE abandoned and sunk by British. Sub. sunk by 'H64'. Planes dropped surface mines. Attacked by approx. sixteen JU 88 bombers. Bombs straddled JEFFERSON MYERS, (four on each side).
6 Mar. " Storm - Planes cannot attack, but causes convoy to split up.
11 Mar. " Sighted Iceland. S.S.YORKMAR is missing.
14 Mar. " Arrived Loch Ewe, Scotland. Learned RICHARD BLAND and S.S.CURRY were sunk; British ship which was searching for us whilst we were lost was also sunk.
15 Mar. " Storm - Dragged two anchors, rammed four ships. Considerable damage to all involved. We must go to drydock.
16 Mar. " Sailed for Loch Long and Glasgow. Arrived 18 Mar.
26 Mar. " Air Raid.
1 Apr. " Moored at Plantation Quay.
2 Apr. " Entered Drydock - left 7 April.
11 Apr. " Left Clydebank, arrived Loch Long same day. Big guns were firing, saw several splashes. Didn't know if they were bombs or shells from shore batteries.
14 Apr. " Sailed for U.S.A.
7 May. " Anchored off City Island, New York.

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THE LIBERTY SHIP "JOHN A. DONALD"

By George O. Rudolph.

(George Rudolph started going to sea some 73 years ago and was a survivor from S.S. CALORIA, torpedoed off Scapa Flow on 16th October 1918)

Jan 22, 1944: The JOHN A. DONALD sailed from New York for Archangel and Murmansk, Russia with me as Second Mate. Our cargo was mainly ammunitions and foodstuffs. Proceeded to sea in a convoy of 61 ships.

Jan 25: At 1630 another 19 ships joined our convoy about 160 miles S.E. of Halifax from where they came with two American aircraft carriers guarding them.

Jan 27: At 1530, 3 ships St Johns, Newfoundland joined the convoy about 180 miles off this port, making a total of 83 cargo ships.

Feb.3: At 1545, signals were received indicating enemy submarines in the vicinity.

Feb.4: In the afternoon spotted two planes patrolling the convoy, same from some land base, our position about 300 miles S.W. of Ireland.

Feb.5: About 1600 an aircraft carrier in our convoy pulled near our starboard side, then a single engine scout plane landed on the carrier's deck.

Feb.7: Arrived at Loch Long, Scotland at 1330. All 83 ships anchored to await escorts to final destinations.

Feb.9: Went ashore by launch to Gourock 5½ miles from anchorage and then by train to Glasgow and Edinburgh. Visited Edinburgh Castle. Was told that part of the castle is used as a Military Barracks, another part as a civil prison in which the German prisoner Rudolph Hess was for a time imprisoned unbeknown to the local population. Left Edinburgh at 1915 and stopped overnight at Glasgow's Merchant Seamens Hotel that was formally opened by Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt.

Feb12: 1135, convoy moved to another anchorage in Scotland, 188 miles further north.

Feb.16: 1007, cargo ships, including JOHN A DONALD sailed to Loch Ewe, some 207 miles further north.

Feb.20: At 1500 in convoy of 43 Merchant ships and 15 Escort vessels we left Scotland for Russia. Escorts were Russian and British naval ships, one battle-ship and several destroyers were British, the Patrol boats were Russian. The following day a British aircraftcarrier joined the convoy.

Feb.24: Enemy submarines and aircraft attacked the convoy.

Feb.25: The British destroyer MAHRATTA was torpedoed and sunk in battle and most of crew lost, close to our ship during darkness.

Feb.28: 1130, ships in convoy divided off Kola Inlet. Our ship with seven others and several escorts proceeded to Port Molotovsk, 20 miles west of Archangel. Cruiser and aircraft carrier went to Murmansk and our escorts were Russian destroyers and patrol boats from here on. During the day flags were ordered at half mast - reason not given.

Feb.29: At 1245 picked up two White Sea pilots from pilot boat for trip to Molotovsk.

Mar 3: Docked at Molotovsk at 1947. Trip through the White Sea from pilot station of 176 miles, consumed 3 days and 5 hours. Average speed was 2.3 knots through heavy ice. Three ice breakers, all Russian used in assisting eight Cargo ships in single column on trip.

Mar.7: At 1300 left Molotovsk after discharging 1820 tons of cargo and with three other Liberty ships and one ice breaker went to Archangel 42 miles through heavy ice arriving at 0200 Mar 9:

Mar.18: Completed discharging of all cargo at Archangel with women labour as all Russian men were at battlefields fighting the Germans. (Population 46,950 -1923 census). Found it a pleasant city with several public libraries and art galleries open to the public. The Russians were very hospitable. Shifted ship to Maimaksa a distance of 9 miles for loading of pulp wood (2000 tons for U.S.A.)

Mar.21: Left Maimaksa at 2228. Russian ice breaker towed ship to and from this port through heavy ice. With four other freighters and three ice breakers we proceeded through White Sea ice for Kola Inlet near Murmansk.

Mar.28: 0530 cleared White Sea ice at Lat 67°22'N Long 41°29'E, 17 miles north of ice edge where JOHN A DONALD entered ice in trip south on Feb.29. Proceeded in convoy of 6 ships with 6 Russian naval vessels to Kola Inlet.

Mar.29: 0900 anchored in Kola Inlet 7 miles above Murmansk awaiting convoy.

Apr. 7: Left Murmansk anchorage at 0930. 40 ships in convoy plus 20 navy escorts, two aircraft carriers and one battle-cruiser bound for Scotland, where we arrived Apr.16. at 0015 and anchored in Clyde off Gourock.

Apr.20: 2100 left Clyde anchorage for U.S.A. 112 ships in convoy following day, plus two aircraft carriers and several escorts.

Apr.27: At 1335 passed empty lifeboat adrift in Lat 54°41'N 30°14'W.

May 2: 0515 passed an iceberg about 1½ miles off our starboard side: 0600 passed 2 miles off an iceberg on our port side in Lat 46°22'N Long 47°47'E. Berg about 55 feet high and 180 feet long.

May 8: Arrived New York.

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THE FINAL DELIVERY

By Raymond Brouche

"S.S.CAESAR RODNEY"

I signed on the CAESAR RODNEY on Nov.8, 1945 at New York and we sailed with no cargo to the port of Philadelphia. Here we continued to load the ship for a period of over six weeks, we were taking the last load of "Lease-Lend" products to Russia. It was a special cargo and a very mixed load. We loaded machine tools, lathes, milling machines and diesel-electric generating sets. Also all the machinery needed to set up a factory to produce car and truck tyres. The Tween Decks of at least two holds were filled with food-stuffs and clothing collected from organizations for European Relief.

Our "Deck Load" was comprised of five giant steam locomotives made by the Baldwin Locomotive Company. For handling, the locomotives were disassembled into two main parts, one the boiler and cab, and the second the cylinders, wheels and chassis. Two units would just fit on each hatch cover.

We were finally loaded and sailed on Christmas Eve, 1945. The trip to Murmansk was pretty uneventful and the North Atlantic was not as bad as some of my winter crossings. As you know, Murmansk is ice free even though the winter temperatures are very low. The Russians wanted the food and clothing really bad, but we could not unload the cargo holds until our heavy deck cargo was discharged. They stopped work on another ship so we could move in and get our deck load off. In January there is hardly any daylight in Murmansk, around 1130 the sun would just get above the horizon and then set again within the hour, however the weather was fair as it was too cold to snow.

After unloading we found out we were to have a return cargo as an agreement for the Lease-Lend cargo. The cargo would be Chromium Ore which was on the U.S. critical materials list, and rough sawn lumber to be used in rebuilding Europe. We would receive this cargo at Molotovsk!! Molotovsk is actually about 4° south of Murmansk, however it is not an open-water port, but land locked down in the White Sea. They said an Ice-Breaker would take us in through ice four feet thick. We steamed for about ½ a day through open water with just some loose ice flows. Then we met the Ice-Breaker and the fun began. The Ice-Breaker was the most modern and powerful in the world at that time, provided by the U.S. and on loan to the Russians. They of course renamed it, but it had been the NORTH WIND, NORTH STAR, or something with the name NORTH in it. The Ice-Breaker was powerful and had a beam of about 78 feet and could open up a good channel. The CAESAR RODNEY with only 2500 H.P. could just not follow, as hard as we would try and we were running light, so our propeller was not getting a really good bite. The engine crew never worked so hard, 40 to 50 bells per watch, Full Ahead for 10 minutes, Stop, Full Astern for 10 minutes, etc, etc, etc. Once when the Ice-Breaker was manoeuvring back close she actually hit us, but the hole she made was above the water line when we were light. After eleven days we finally covered the 250 miles through the ice and arrived at Molotovsk. We started loading chromium ore in the bottom of the holds. The lumber would go

(Excerpts)

Charles A. Lloyd.

in the Tween Deck space and on the main deck. The temperature was averaging 30° - 40° below zero, they wanted to weld a patch on the bow but had to wait more than ten days until a time when the temperature was less than 25° below zero. Welding steel plates in colder temperatures can produce critical stress areas adjacent to the weld and split the plates. Even though CAESAR RODNEY had special insulation on her deck steam-piping, to help in the cold temperatures, we were however constantly battling the severe temperatures with all kinds of mechanical problems.

At least we were adequately clothed with felt boots and sheepskin lined coats and mittens. The cargo was loaded by German Prisoners of War, who were ill clothed and fed. The prisoner's noon meal, eaten while standing on the dock, would be some kind of cabbage based soup in an army type canteen cup and a chunk of Russian black bread.

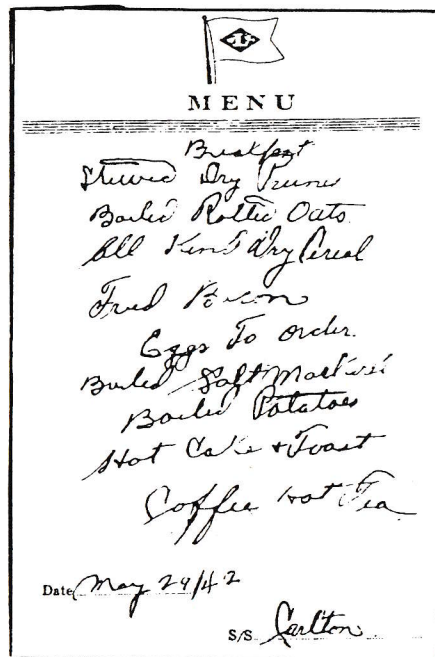
During one period of extreme cold, cargo loading was suspended because too many prisoners were disabled due to frozen hands. We had trouble keeping the ship warm, the metal around the portholes would build up frost over an inch thick, we finally found life jackets made good insulation and we packed them over the portholes. The steam-heating usually worked at 12 psi, this was not hot enough so we raised it up to 60 psi, even this couldnt keep the Radio Shack above freezing. Our solution was to put another generator on the line and hang strings of 200 watt bulbs in the shack.

We always had a pretty nice menu aboard ship. The Russian Officers and Port Personnel always seemed to show up just before mealtime, the Chief or the Skipper would always have to ask them to eat with us, I can still remember all the Russians with their chestful of medals and ribbons. We were the only ship in port and the port was just a simple dock, with the town of Molotovsk about two miles away over about four feet of hard packed snow.

We were finally loaded and the Ice-Breaker returned to take us out, we had been dreading the return trip which we thought would be a repeat of our trip coming in. It was only bad for about one day and then the Ice-Breaker found some natural channels where the ice was shifting and our trip out was only a few days.

The trip to Bremerhaven, Germany was uneventful. We unloaded all our lumber at Bremerhaven. This was nine months after the war was over in Europe, but the city was completely bombed out, all the streets had been cleared and repaired, but very few serviceable buildings were standing. We came home with the chromium ore and some surplus army equipment. I signed off the ship in Baltimore, 14 April, 1946.

A LIBERTY SHIP BREAKFAST MENU



Published by courtesy of "THE POINTER"

Journal of the U.S.N. Armed Guard

World War II Veterans.

On December 6, 1941, the S.S. LARRANGA left the Port of Boston on a trip that would take her to Murmansk, Russia. The Armed Guard crew aboard got its first taste of battle when it fired its guns three times at a surfaced submarine on Christmas Eve, scoring a possible hit on the submarine with the second round. These few rounds were the first to be fired by the Armed Guard at the enemy but many more were to follow before the war ended. Some 347 merchant ships were to be sent to Murmansk through April 26, 1945 and most of the 46 ships lost were sustained between January 5, 1942 and March 14, 1943. The navy made every effort possible to give all these ships the armament and large quantities of ammunition and it paid off as expert Armed Guard crews gained experience, with plenty of targets.

Floating mines were spotted and a severe gale caught the convoy on March 25th and scattered all but 5 of the original 20 ships after a two day storm. On March 28, a German plane began shadowing the convoy while 5 other ships and a destroyer joined the convoy. The S.S. RACELAND was torpedoed or bombed on this date and the S.S. BATEAU was lost from unknown causes. Fortunately for others, four destroyers and a cruiser joined them on March 29 in time to protect these from a surface battle with German destroyers 150 miles northwest of Murmansk. The battle was fought in a heavy snow squall with shells falling and exploding around all ships. The escorts were damaged, but they also inflicted damage to the enemy which included the sinking of one of their destroyers. A enemy scout bomber dropped its bombs into the sea after the S.S. DUBOYNE opened fire with its nine guns.

On the morning of March 30, the S.S. EFFINGHAM was torpedoed 150 feet astern of the DUBOYNE but was able to launch two lifeboats. Some of the men died in these boats because of exposure. When the convoy was abeam of Kildin Island, some 20 miles north of Murmansk, four bombs were dropped ahead of the S.S. ELDENA and two near the S.S. MORMACMAR. Only nine of the original twenty ships were present as the entry was made into the Port of Murmansk. Enemy subs were also in the area but were heavily attacked by the escorting vessels. The Russian planes and the effective firepower from the anti-aircraft guns in the hills around the City of Murmansk were welcome sights to the battle weary men who had not slept in three days as they slipped through Kola Inlet and anchored on March 30, 1942.

Only two American ships, the S.S. YAKA and S.S. CHESWALD, had Armed Guard crews aboard in PQ 14. They left Reykjavik on April 6 and many ships turned back to fog and snow. The enemy shadow plane circled out of range on the 15th and escorts made contact with 3 enemy destroyers. Next day, a German plane appeared but left and at 1235, the Commodore's ship was torpedoed and sunk in about one minute. Rescue ships picked up 31 survivors from the icy waters. More bombs were dropped and torpedoed seen and the escorts sank a submarine ahead as they entered Murmansk harbor on April 19. While in port, they shared in daily attacks that PQ 13 was receiving. The YAKA missed sailing when the convoy left on April 28 due to damage to her bow and propeller. On May 12 and 14, she was damaged again from near misses and on May 15, a bomb hit her No. 2 boiler. More bombs on May 27 missed the ship but bomb fragments on June 13 opened her deep tank and made 14 holes in her port side but her crew shot down one enemy plane. While in Murmansk, the YAKA experienced 156 air raid alarms. Bombs were dropped on the city 48 times and 19 times, the planes dropped no bombs. She was attacked five times and about 50 bombs were dropped near her.

PQ 15 included 16 American ships when it left Iceland for Murmansk on April 26. These ships were: S.S.s ALCOA RAMBLER, EXPOSITOR, DEER LODGE, MORMACRIO, TEXAS, SEATTLE SPIRIT, ZEBULON B. VANCE, BAYOU CHICO, PAULLUCKENBACH CAPRIA, HEGIRA, LANCASTER, FRANCIS SCOTT KEY, ALCOA CADET, MORMACREY and the TOPA TOPA. Mines were encountered and enemy scout planes started on

April 30 and on May 1, one of the 3 enemy planes was shot down, their bombs fell wide. On May 5, five or more planes sunk three merchantmen in rapid order. The attack took place after midnight and one plane crashed in flames. A few minutes later, a lookout on the S.S. EXPOSITOR sighted a conning tower in the center of the convoy, just a few yards off the starboard quarter. As the submarine changed course, the 4.5 gun on the EXPOSITOR was brought to bear and the top of the conning tower was blown off. A torpedo was avoided by backing the ship at full speed. The USN Armed Guard on this ship consisted only of four gunners, a signalman striker and the officer, Lt. Robert B. Ricks of Gainsville, Georgia, who was awarded the first Silver Star Medal presented to an Armed Guard Officer. He had been assigned to the EXPOSITOR in February, 1942. They left Pier 98 in Philadelphia on March 4, 1942 and headed for New York where a cargo was taken on that heavy clothing gives no protection. The EXPOSITOR carried 5,000 cases of TNT.

Most of the ships left Murmansk on May 21 and arrived in New York, June 28. The ships left behind continued to receive constant bombings and it became worse.

(Editors note: The next section of Shipmate Lloyd's report includes Convoys PQ 16, 17 and 18. These will be used in future editions of Northern Light when we dedicate editions to those convoys)

A 'trickle movement' of ships was tried at the end of October, 1942 by sending out ten ships, five American and five British, who were to brave the hazards of the voyage to Murmansk without escort. They left one ship at a time, at 12 hour intervals, so they could travel 100 miles apart. It was not tried again due to the high loss of ships and personnel.

Convoy JW 51A consisted of 16 merchant ships and equal number of escorts. It left Loch Ewe on December 15. Russian I.D. Spotters were placed on merchant ships while in port due to shooting down two friendly Russian planes.

Convoy JW 51B consisted of 15 ships plus escorts and left Loch Ewe on December 22. Among ten American ships was one veteran of the ferocious German Sub attack just ten days earlier. The ship was the JEFFERSON Meyer which was in convoy from London to Hull when E-boats attacked it in 'E-boat Alley' east of Dartmouth (???) on December 12. Five ships were sunk there. Many men in this and other convoys to follow lost 10 to 20 pounds in a few days. Young men became old men in a short time. According to the Officer of the NICHOLAS GILMAN, "The suffering they endured is beyond my power to express". Many other ships would sail to Russian ports and many suffered an equally or worse fates. Those men who did go and survive consider themselves very lucky.

When the S.S. EFFINGHAM was sunk on March 30, 1942 while on her way to Murmansk, the Chief Merchant Marine Officer, Louis S. Hathaway who was in charge of the lifeboat, stayed at the main oar most of the time for 32 hours in the frigid weather when picked up by H.M.S. HARRIER. Five men died in the boat and the survivors owe their lives to him for his courage and leadership according to the Senior Officer C.P. Hinton, RN of the Sixth Minesweeping Flotilla on April 11, 1942 who submitted that Hathaway was entitled to recognition beyond the call of duty.

Another big factor was the extreme bitter cold, rain, bad weather and turbulent seas, or the combination of them all. Many ships collided in the convoys due to these rough seas, continuous fog that limited seeing distance to a few feet. It was necessary to extend a 300 foot line, with a towing fog buoy attached from the stern of the ship to serve as a warning so the ones on the ship's watches, fore and aft, could see it if they closed in on the ship ahead. It was designed to send a pattern of water about five feet in the air.

Many ships left the United States in December of 1941 and early 1942 which was destined for Murmansk were ill-equipped with suitable clothing and even the guns. Some crews even placed creosote poles, as a disguise, on the bow

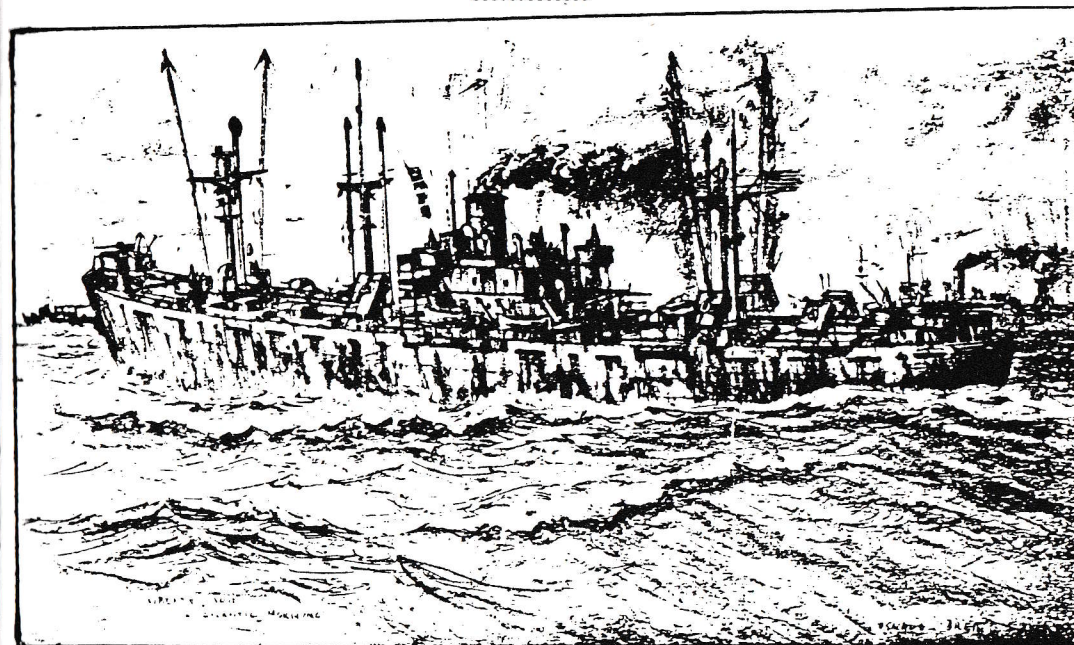
and stern until they could be replaced with real guns. Some guns were placed on the ship after they arrived in England. Most small caliber guns were replaced there before going on to Russia and to face the enemy planes. All vessels were armed with what guns were available at the time. Due to the circumstances, the Armed Guard and the Merchant Crew were fortunate not to have lost more of their ships to and from the Russian Ports.

TO THE GERMAN, ITALIAN AND JAPANESE MOTHERS, FATHERS AND LOVED ONES OF YOUR FIGHTING FORCES OF WORLD WAR II, OUR HEARTS POUR OUT TO YOU IN THE LOSS OF YOUR LOVED ONES WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN A WAR THAT SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN. THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF YOUR LEADERS MAY NEVER BE ANSWERED, BUT IT IS THE PRAYERS OF OUR CREW THAT NEVER AGAIN WILL OUR DESCENDENTS BE CALLED ON TO MAIM, CRIPPLE AND KILL ONE ANOTHER. THERE ARE NO WINNERS IN WAR.

TO THE UNITED STATES NAVY ARMED GUARD AND MERCHANT SEAMEN WHO SERVED, AND TO ALL THE MEN FROM ALL NATIONS WHO SERVED AND BROUGHT YOU PROVISIONS NECESSARY TO TURN BACK YOUR ENEMY TO SAVE YOU FROM THE AGRESSOR, AND TO ALL THE NATIONS WHO TOOK A HEROIC PART IN THIS HARDSHIP AND STRUGGLE TO RID YOU OF YOUR ENEMY, THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE SHOULD ALWAYS BE INDEBTED.

TO THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN WORLD WAR II AND TO ALL THOSE WHO SACRIFICED THEIR ALL BRINGING TO YOU THE PROVISIONS OF WAR, THIS PARTICULAR SEGMENT OF THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED AS A SHINING LIGHT TO WORLD PEACE.

Charles A. Lloyd
1949
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A LIBERTY SHIP ON THE NORTH ATLANTIC - 1943

Our friend Mr Brett, internationally known marine artist, sketched this view of a Liberty Ship while he was an A.B. aboard the R.M.S. 'QUEEN ELIZABETH' in 1943.

THE FORGOTTEN CONVOY

An excerpt from the book "Unsung Heroes" which is the story of the U.S. Armed Guard during World War II.

Printed with acknowledgements.

Murmansk is a bleak place...reception as cold as the weather.
--Nicholas Montserrat, "The Cruel Sea"

Murmansk was indeed a bleak place, and life was not made any more attractive to the armed guard and their merchant shipmates by the heavy and continuous German raids. Murmansk lies above the Arctic Circle, only 1,400 miles from the North Pole, and besides subzero cold it offers a six-week long polar night. Conversely, at the height of summer, the midnight sun shines dimly through the night, low in the sky. Located on the Kola Gulf of the Barents Sea, Murmansk became the major port for the delivery of lend-lease supplies, then transported by rail to the front to the south. Thanks to the moderating influence of the Gulf Stream, it is ice free. Archangel, on the White Sea, was the second most important port of delivery of war supplies, but Dvina Gulf would freeze over making it difficult to reach, so a new deep-water port was built at Molotovsk, and many ships on the Murmansk run would unload there. Much further from German air bases, Archangel and Molotovsk did not take the battering that Murmansk underwent from enemy air attack.

When the weary and often badly injured or frost-bitten convoy survivors finally made it to port, they might have justifiably felt that they would be welcomed, along with the precious cargo that they carried. However, they soon found that such was not the case. Gunner's Mate John Sheridan remembers his experience: "... Upon arrival in Murmansk, a Soviet officer came aboard and talked to the Captain and the AG officer. He gave them a set of orders for the Americans. When posted, Sheridan wondered if this was a friendly nation. They quickly learned; there were only two places Americans could go, everything else was out of bounds. The two were the International Club and the Intourist Hotel. There was to be no contact with women, they were to speak only to hotel employees. The Americans were to be back on their ships by 10:00 p.m.; anyone on shore after that would be arrested and out of the ship's jurisdiction. No drunkenness was to be tolerated. There was to be no trade with civilians; it was a serious offence and could mean a jail term. If anyone got into trouble ashore, their A.G. officer could not help them.

As Sheridan's crew put it, "God, what a place this is!" It didn't improve as time went by. At the Intourist Hotel an upstairs room was supposed to serve as a restaurant for seamen of various ships, but only tea, vodka, a hunk of black bread was available. They found that a Russian soldier on guard at their ship spoke some English, and when no one was observing, he delighted in smoking an American cigarette and talking until others showed up. He would never accept a pack of cigarettes, as he said he would be searched upon return from duty and it would be a serious offence.

Sheridan and the crew of SS OWEN WISTER were lucky, they were only there three weeks the first time, but other ships had long delays unloading and getting away.

Ed Quin served as a radioman aboard the Liberty SS HENRY VILLARD, which arrived in Archangel in 1944. His convoy was one of the lucky ones; it never lost a ship, although it had a big scare out of Norway when the German SCHARNHORST came out, guns blazing. Radio silence of the convoy was abruptly broken - "Disperse!" Quin reports: "The convoy had British corvettes as escort to the tip of Bear Island, when it met Soviet escorts, but communications left much to be desired. The Soviets never did tell us the depth of the Dvina River outside of Archangel, so we promptly went aground in the mouth of the river. We spent three months in Archangel and lived at the Intourist Hotel. There was no heat,

and while the hotel had an excellent dining room, there was no food. We were told, "Don't go into town, and don't go anywhere without your guide, but our favorite pastime was to split up as soon as we got outside, and he could't follow everybody. We would go into the black market and barter or sell everything except the clothes on our backs. The guide, an elderly man, had lived for some years in New York City and had worked as a photographer; he would forget anything for Lucky Strikes.

The weather was 40° below, and the stevedores worked twelve hours straight with only one bowl of borscht all day. Many of them were crippled war vets, minus a hand or an arm. There were also some husky women unloading cargo.

We had a glimpse of Soviet justice, fast and final. As the cargo in crates was being unloaded, a net gave way, and two crates crashed on the dock, splitting open. Inside were "long-johns". The spilled goods were quickly picked up and put back in crates and lids nailed down. At the end of the shift the workers were lined up at the end of the dock, and the Soviet Army Guards checked them physically. One man was found to have stuffed a pair of long-johns inside his jacket. He was quickly marched to the end of the dock and shot immediately in front of everybody, including us.....

.....Eugene D.Meadows, at eighteen, was fresh out of convoy signal school when he was assigned to the SS HENRY WYNEKOOP and found himself in Murmansk. "Upon arrival we were given a list of restrictions from the Russians to abide by while we were in port. Our lieutenant advised us that if we got into trouble we were strictly on our own because the Navy would be unable to help us. Among these instructions were that we could not have anything to do with Russian women nor could we do any trading with the Russian people. We saw no attractive women, so that was no problem, but we did want to bring some mementos back with us so we heard we could trade candy and cigarettes for knives, made from metal of German aircraft shot down over Murmansk. So, a shipmate and I left the ship one evening with pockets stuffed with candy bars and cigarettes. A boy about 14 indicated he had some knives, but as he was about to give them to us he was grabbed by two men with guns. They beat him up and told us we were under arrest. During that walk I could think of nothing else but having to spend the rest of my life in the Siberian salt mines. However, just before we got to the police station, they stopped and searched us and confiscated all our candy and cigarettes and ordered us to go. To this day I wondered what would have happened to us if those Russian policemen had not become greedy"

Art MacLaren, Mesa, Arizona, was a cadet/midshipman when he was assigned to the SS THOMAS HARTLEY for her second trip to Murmansk. When he saw the Cyrillic marking on the cargo, he had no doubts as to where they were going. The rousing film, "Action in the North Atlantic," starring Humphrey Bogart, was popular at the time and did nothing to reduce concern. However, as the SCHARNHORST had been sunk on the previous convoy, they travelled along the Norwegian coast route rather than go via Iceland. They were observed often by enemy planes, but did not sustain any serious attacks. He adds, "During our trip north we daily became heavier as ice formed and piled up until the decks were filled to the tops of the hatches, ice was in the rigging, and the entire convoy took on an eerie appearance. Airplanes, tanks, and other cargo blended into a fantasy land. On arrival, steam was turned on deck to assist in loosening the ice, and the Russians brought a considerable number of people on board to clear the ice the old-fashioned way, by chipping. There were several members of the crew who professed to be of Communist-bent and were ecstatic of the prospect of being in Russia. Their first shock was to find they were denied shore leave as the Commissar stated the Russians did not want any opportunists around". Other veterans of the run have confirmed that Communist agitators made no converts among those who were on the Murmansk run.

MacLaren added that Murmansk was so desolate that one would expect that

the bars would do a land-office business, but the limited funds allowed each member of the crew and the potency of the 200-proof vodka, plus the difficulty of navigating back to the ship in 25-below weather, put a decided chill on the social scene.

World War I had its "Lost Battalion" in the Argonne Forest; World War II had its "Lost Convoy," seemingly lost for up to eight months in North Russian ports in 1943. The "Forgotten Convoy" is another strange story of the Murmansk run, certainly never to be forgotten by any of the members of the naval armed guard or their merchant marine shipmates who were aboard any of the eight ships involved. Certain memories are unprintable, but the general feeling was very well summed up in a few lines from a poem written by an AG in Murmansk after several months:

In this forlorn place, for the best part of a year
Yet no sign of departure seems to draw near.
Are we forgotten? Don't they know we exist?
Or are we marked "missing" in the casualty list?
Why can't we leave here? Doesn't anyone know?
Can't hold out much longer, our stores have run low.
Where is that damned convoy, why doesn't it come?
Let someone relieve us, so we can go home!

The eight ships that made up that Forgotten Convoy were the steamships ARTIGAS, BEACONHILL, BERING, CITY OF OMAHA, ISRAEL PUTNAM, FRANCIS SCOTT KEY, MOBILE CITY and the THOMAS HARTLEY. The tanker BEACONHILL departed New York on 4 January 1944 and did not return until 3 December, but even so it beat the ISRAEL PUTNAM, which did not get back until after Christmas. The THOMAS HARTLEY also left New York in January and soon had a foretaste of what was to come. AG gunner Hilary Makowski of Pittsburgh describes the trip over. "we left New York for Scotland in a convoy of about thirty ships. The weather seemed pretty rough, compared with Three Rivers in Pittsburgh. but I thought it was supposed to be that way. Crossing the Atlantic was a battle, it took 16 days on a zig-zag course. At night star-shells would light the sky. A German sub appeared in the middle of the convoy, and was visible, but I couldn't shoot the 5-inch 51 since, in line with the sub, was a tanker and the AG officer said to hold. It was a rough trip, with ships being sunk all round.

"On 15 February after regrouping in Scotland we set sail for Murmansk. The weather was terrible. Each day as we sailed, the waves were higher than the masts, when we were on top of a wave all you could see of the ships on your port or starboard sides was about a foot of their masts, and when we were in the pits, all they could see of us was the same. Depth charges were dropped constantly by the destroyers and cruisers protecting us. One of our ships was damaged in an air raid."

On 26 February the main convoy divided, one group going to Murmansk, the other headed for Archangel. An AG on the tanker BEACONHILL reported that the White Sea was frozen solid and was littered with seals and their pups. The convoy was met by a Russian icebreaker that led the ships to Molotovsk, the deep seaport for Archangel, about 30 miles to the west. Port facilities were still being built at time of arrival and it took ten days to unload BEACONHILL, following which it was ordered to carry a cargo of fuel oil to Murmansk. The BEACONHILL then began a shuttle service of eight months in which it gained the name "Murmansk Ferry Boat." Murmansk was bombed almost constantly, but because of the added distance, Molotovsk was hit infrequently and was much safer for tankers. After the ice broke in the Dvina River, tankers were sent to Archangel, and Molotovsk was used for other vessels.

The SS THOMAS HARTLEY had a hard time of it in Murmansk; it was one air raid after another, the record showing 169 in a ninety-day period. John Mitchell, a gunner from Jeanette, Pennsylvania, kept a diary of the entire trip, excerpts of which reflect the action and complete exhaustion of the navy gun crew as a result of the attacks, which continued days on end and for hours at a time:

2 March - We were the first ship to sail from the USA to Murmansk that arrived safely with PT boats on our deck. Forty others were sunk or damaged beyond repair.

3 March - Two air raids, but the weather not good, so they were dropping incendiaries and one dropped into one of our life boats; smothered it before it burned the boat up.

5 March - All quiet, snow storm.

6 March - Our first big attack at the docks. They came in waves and gave us Hell. Started at 7:00 p.m. and ended at 9:00 p.m. Worse than 25 February because it was at night and there was nothing we could do. Hit an English ship and the Arctic Hotel, fires all over Murmansk. Hit ammo dump 100 yards from the ship.

7 March - It is snowing and also my birthday, but didn't seem like any I had before.

8 March - Skies full of hell-dropping planes. They kept coming over steady for seven hours, except for 32 minutes. All so damn tired we slept with our helmets and clothes on. What a night.

9 March - Nearly all cargo discharged. No raids, bad weather, thank God.

10 March - At noon nine dive-bombers gave us plenty to think about, and they sure can give a man plenty to think about.

11 March - First air raid around 9:30 a.m., got another plane. They kept us going all the rest of the day and all night till 6:00 a.m. the next morning.

14 March - More raids, shot down three. We were so tired of staying up night and day. Almost discharged, starting to take on chrome ore for ballast.

16 March - Two raids, bombed the docks right at our ship, left a hole 20 feet around and plenty deep, air full of debris. Flying bridge hit with pieces of logs.

21 March - No planes, sky overcast with snow and clouds.

25 March - Bad news, we have to go back into docks to load more chrome ore.

26 March - Back in the hell-hole at same berth. If we stay here a week without being hit and sunk at dock we will be damn lucky. Sleeping with clothes and helmets on ready for battle station at any time.

30 March - Away from docks, planes still try to get us but we are always ready for them and have more of a chance here. Have 17 hours of daylight now, Northern Lights beautiful to see.

2 April - Waiting for convoy to come in so we can start home. Big snowstorm so no raids. Thank God for this weather.

3 April - Beautiful and sky full of planes coming after us as no more ships in dock. Started at 8:30 p.m. and kept it up till 2:00 a.m. plus dropping floating mines into the river. Ship trembled from stem to stern.

4 April - Back again, one of the floating mines hit the ARTIGAS and they are towing her in to patch up the hole in her hull. Really had two close ones, one bomb hit ten feet off our beam and one off the stern. Blew all the glass out of the gauge indicators in the engine room, knocked all lights out and men down, even turned the deck plates and bowed them. Kept coming till 1:25 a.m.

5 April - Well we had so many raids today I don't see how we can go on much longer without sleep or food. Captain asked for a new anchorage where it isn't so hot with dive-bombers.

7 April - New anchorage so everyone got a bit of rest. Thank God.

12 April - Just one month ago we were catching Hell at the docks. Now we are sure getting low on food, no fruit, butter all spoiled, eggs not fit to eat. Enough of canned milk for two weeks, but worst of all is that our ammo is almost gone and no place to get anything at all.

28 April - Arrived Molotovsk, nice here because the Jerries don't bomb here as it is too far.

4 July - First Christmas I ever had on the 4th July for I got a package, chewing gum and shaving cream from home.

11 July - Second Christmas, 41 letters from home, January 1 - April 28.

22 July - Food very low, only one fair meal in five days.

30 October - We are leaving for Murmansk tomorrow and that is what we have been waiting for for such a long time. Homeward Bound!

3 November - Picked up our escort, we are in "coffin corner". Can make it back by 15 December if all goes well.

15 December - Sixty-five miles out of New York. A long trip but over now, the Statue of Liberty will look awfully good to us.

Hilary Makowski also served on the THOMAS HARTLEY as gunner and vividly recalls the air raids and 300 General Alarms. He reports that the navy gun crew and the merchant marines assisted in unloading the ship so it could get away from the dock. "We received a letter of Commendation, but Hell, we just wanted to move out to a better location in the Kola River. However, we discovered quickly that it was just as bad. It was in 'Stuka Bend', and every time we turned around we had a Stuka diving at us"

Somebody had a brainstorm and decided to send us down to the White Sea, to Molotovsk. The move was said to be for our safety, but they forgot to send us any edibles, and we almost starved. I only had a 32-inch waist before, but I had so much belt left over that I had to tie a knot in it. We stayed in Molotovsk for five months, wondering what was going on. It was an awful bore, we all took turns arguing or fighting with each other. We made baseballs out of sox, gloves from the asbestos gloves we used for our 20mm gun barrels, baseball bats were turned in the engine room from the 4 x 4s we found on the docks.

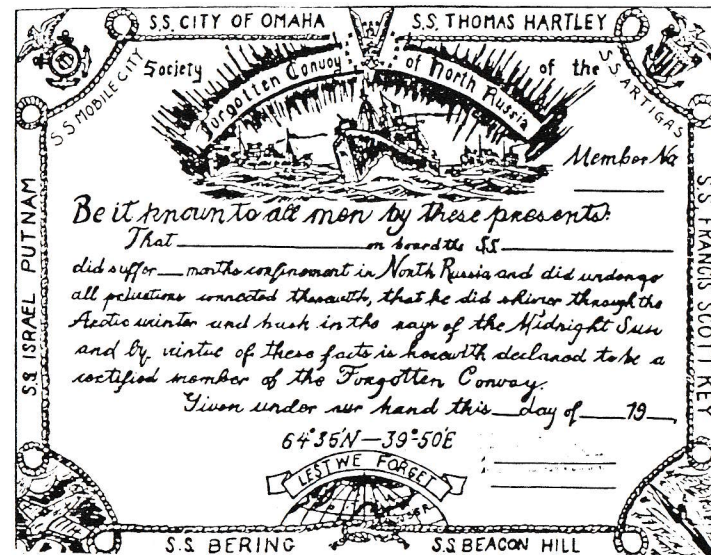
The Russians used convicts to unload ships. These people were so skinny from lack of food that it is a wonder they could do anything at all; they only got a piece of black bread and about four ounces of potato soup, once a day. We would give them our left overs from our meals when we had food, and they would stuff anything we gave them in their coat pockets including mashed potatoes. While in Molotovsk we had garbage trucks haul away the trash and garbage. One day a prisoner stepped out of line and grabbed a handful of coffee grounds and jammed them in his mouth. For that he received a bayonet in the stomach. One ex-soldier told me that he got three - five years for getting drunk and throwing a stone through the window.

The only bright spot of his stay in Russia was one day when Malowski was in the Intourist dining room. A guy from the FRANCIS SCOTT KEY came in and hollered "Is there anybody from Pittsburgh here?" He hollered back "Hey, Hunky" which he was called back home. He lived about three blocks away in Pittsburgh.

He adds, "When we finally reached the Clyde River, tugs tied up and sent up sides of beef and a lot of other food. We were so close to starving that the doctors held us in quarantine, checked us out, and gave us pills totake before we ate, so that we would not vomit the food; it was too rich for our stomachs as we had eaten so poorly for six months...We had crossed the Arctic Circle on 27 February 1943 outbound, and did not get back to the States until the of the year - truly the Forgotten Convoy."

Various ships of the Forgotten Convoy had other problems, but the food problem was universal. Max Jones, Apex, North Carolina, said "We had fried Spam for breakfast, cold Spam for lunch and Spam steak for dinner," but he added that "we were better off than the inhabitants of Molotovsk. They lived in a community building, one family to a room, and all cooked off the same stove, grass soup was a regular item in their diet. There was a prison nearby and the prisoners were used to unload ships; they would sneak into our quarters anytime they could

searching for cigarette butts or scraps of food." Jones was a navy gunner aboard the ISRAEL PUTNAM, which broke its propeller in the ice and sat in drydock for a lengthy period for repairs. The SS ARTIGAS was damaged by a bomb but was lucky. She had originally been scheduled to go to Russia in disastrous Convoy PQ-17, but drew 29 feet and had to be diverted to Scotland to unload some cargo, as the maximum draft in Soviet ports was 25 feet. Bob Layman of Augusta, Maine, served in the CITY OF OMAHA and reported that after forty-plus years he still dislikes anything Russian. However, he and the other NAGs of the Forgotten Convoy are proud of the certificate they received, acknowledging each as a member of the "Society of the Forgotten Convoy of North Russia, 64°35'N, 39°50'E." The certificate, (below) was signed by Commander S.B. Frankel, Assistant U.S. Naval Attache, Archangel-Murmansk U.S.S.R. (later Rear Admiral) reads:"...did suffer months confinement in North Russia, that he did shiver through the Arctic winter, and bask in the rays of the Midnight Sun..." The hand drawn certificate lists the names of all the ships of the Forgotten Convoy and had a slogan in the form of a scroll, **LEST WE FORGET**". No one in that convoy ever will.



Certificate of the "Forgotten Convoy of North Russia." (Courtesy of several members of the convoy)

There were a number of official reasons given for the long stay in Russia, including a shortage of escort vessels for the return voyage, the desire of naval authorities to wait until later in the year when darkness would provide more cover, and others, but it is still a question.

All veterans of the Murmansk run are in agreement that Russia was a grim and cheerless place, and nothing could be worse than being there at Christmas time. Signalman C.A. "Pete" Burke reports that spirits were even lower than usual as his crew sat around on Christmas Eve, until the subject of a Christmas party was discussed. Suggestions flew and were discarded; trees were available, but to cut one would immediately land the cutter in jail and incite an international incident. However, ideas were put into action, and a tree was produced as beautiful as any bunch of sailors could produce on Christmas Eve in Murmansk. "Our tree didn't have the scent of pine or spruce because it was the handle of a large deck swab. The carpenter drilled holes in it, so wires and coat hangers immediately turned into branches. The skeleton tree was mounted and placed in the middle of the mess table, where strange ornaments began to pile up in preparation for the formal trimming. Yellow papers once wrapped around oranges began

by becoming Christmas balls, tin foil from the galley became tinsel, and the ship's machinist cut out a brass star for the top of the tree. Other improvised ornaments grew rapidly; our spirits soared and by 11:00 p.m. we were ready to put it together.

Security watch was at a minimum in port, so most of the gun crew were able to participate. The captain chipped in with a bottle of bourbon and one blended whisky, which went into a large 'punchbowl', a galley pot, along with cans of grapefruit juice, orange juice and pineapple juice, - plus a gallon of the local moonshine, and this kept the party going until the tree was finally trimmed.

We knew it was made of a mop handle and some wire, it was trimmed with bits of paper and junk, and it lacked the aroma of a real yuletide tree...but it was beautiful

P O E T S C O R N E R
Ian A Millar (North Carolina)

MEN OF THE ARCTIC SHIPS

LIFT YOUR GLASSES HIGH MY BOYS -
TO THE MEN OF THE ARCTIC SHIPS -
THEY KEPT YOU ALL FROM STARVING -
WHILE THEY MADE A THOUSAND TRIPS.

TO THE MILITARY GO THE ACCOLADES -
AYE... THEIR GLORIES SET IN SONG -
WHILE FORGOTTEN SLEEP THE MERCHANTMEN -
TO THE SEA THEIR LAUGHTER GONE.

AYE... LIFT YOUR GLASSES HIGH AGAIN -
TO JIMI, DONALD AND ROB -
WHO SAILED THE FREIGHTERS AND TANKERS TOO -
SO CLOSE TO THE TOUCH OF GOD.

WHO RECALLS THE SEARING COLD -
THE EXPLODING AMMO SHIPS -
SHIPMATES BOB IN ARCTIC SEAS -
LOVED ONES NAMES ON FROZEN LIPS.

AYE LIFT YOUR GLASSES HIGH MY BOYS -
TO THE LOST OF THE ARCTIC SHIPS -
FOR STILL THEY HAUNT THOSE ARCTIC SEAS -
WHERE SEAS RUN HIGH AND WILD WINDS RIP.

MURMANSK RUN

YOUNG MEN IN YEARS THE BATTLE STRAIN SHOWIN -
WHILE THE LIBERTY'S DECK WAS PITCHIN AND ROLLIN -
THE FOG BANKS CAME ON AND THE ARCTIC GALES BLOWIN -
AMMO AFIRE SET DECK PLATES A GLOWIN.

ICEBERGS AND U-BOATS MAKE MIGHTY TOUGH GOIN -
THE LIFEBOATS THEY HAD WERE BASTARDS FOR ROWIN -
AND MANY A MERCHANTMAN'S FRAYED NERVES WERE SHOWIN -
TO THE HELL OF NORTH RUSSIA THEIR SHIPS WERE AGOIN.

THERE WERE MANY BACK THEN AND TODAY STILL NOT KNOWIN -
WHO CALLED THEM DRAFT DODGERS AND THE PLACE THEY WERE GOIN -
WAS FAR FROM THE FRONTS THE NEWSREELS WERE SHOWIN -
THEIR GALLANTRY SCREENED BY THE ARCTIC SNOW BLOWIN.

SOME MEN SAILED TWICE AND AGAIN FULLY KNOWIN -
THE CONDORS AND HEINKELS AND TRACERS AGLOWIN -
THE STARS AND THE STRIPES FROM THE AFT MAST A BLOWIN -
THE MERCHANTMEN KEPT WAR SUPPLIES A FLOWIN.

Ian wrote these poems in tribute to the American merchant seamen, who were treated as bums in their country after the war. (Editor)

THE UNITED STATES NAVY

We had hoped to have a feature from veterans of the U.S. Navy, but they are not completely absent - here are excerpts from a recent letter received from our Honorary Member Douglas Fairbanks, Jnr., KBE., DSC.:-

Dear Mr Squires,

I would like to have the time to write something appropriate for Northern Light, but frankly I just dont have enough time to do justice to the subject. About all I can say now is that I was on the famous allied convoy PQ 17. I was one of the communications officers (and "semi-official historian" for Admiral Giffen) on board the cruiser U.S.S. WICHITA, which was part of the "Close Covering Escort." The convoy was said to be the most disastrous of the war, inasmuch as we lost 28 out of 34 ships!

The worst day was on the 4th of July 1942 and when the leading ship got badly hit by both air-dropped bombs and sub-shot torpedoes and started to sink in the icy-cold, near-Arctic waters, the skipper "blinkered" a last message to us: "Who says we aren't good sports and don't celebrate your national holiday with fireworks!" Not bad eh?

Good luck and best wishes.

Sincerely,


Capt.
Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. USNR (Ret.)

And another letter from a U.S.Navy Veteran who was also on PQ.17:-

Mr. R. D. Squires:

I read your letter of June 6 in the Armed Guard 'Pointer'. I was on the S.S.IRONCLAD which went to Archangel in July 1942 and was in PQ 17....We were saved by HMS AYRESHIRE, a Lieut. Gradwell was C.O. and he herded three ships after the scatter on July 4th....Later, in November on the Lapland Coast I was picked up by HMS Daniman another trawler and taken to Iocanka, Russia below Murmansk....then on a Russian trawler back to Archangel and finally on to the SS OREMAR and came back to Scotland in March. I am in correspondence with LeRoy Perry of San Francisco who was the signalman on SS OREMAR.... I was a Signalman in the U.S. Navy.
Best of Luck.

Francis H. Brummer.

THE STORY OF A WALRUS

By Jack Hayes

The most disastrous losses suffered by any of the long series of Arctic Convoys by which the allies kept the Russian supply lines open was inflicted on the Convoy PQ 17. Whilst the higher command and overall effect of that convoy have been described in official war histories and dispatches, the following tale is one of many unrecorded incidents that occurred all through the war.

It happened whilst I was serving as P.O. Chippy on board HMS PALOMARES, a ship, that had prior to the war belonged to the McAndrews Shipping Line and had, along with her sister ship POZARICA, been converted to serve as A.A. ships. Her main armament was six 4.7 dual purpose guns in three turrets, eight 40 M.M. pom-poms, depth charge throwers and stern racks, Doxford diesel engines and a top speed of about fifteen knots.

A powerful covering escort comprising the first cruiser squadron, LONDON, NORFOLK, the U.S. ships WICHITA and TUSCALOOSA and three destroyers had sailed from Iceland on the night of 30th June/1st July. This escort was some miles behind the convoy and well out of sight to us in PQ 17, that comprised the following ships, most of which were American Liberty Ships, PAULUS POTTER, WASHINGTON, HARTLEBURY, PAN ATLANTIC, RIVER AFTON (Commodore), PETER KERR, EMPIRE BYRON, CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT, SAMUEL CHASE, CARLTON (whose crew were landed on the Norwegian coast and taken prisoner), FAIRFIELD CITY, BENJAMIN HARRISON, EARLSTON, the Russian Tanker AZERBAIJAN (a name heard so often on Russian news today), NAVARINO, PANKRAFT, EL CAPITAN, HOOSIER, IRONCLAD, BOLTON CASTLE, OLOPANA, BILLINGHAM, ALCOA RANGER, EMPIRE TIDE (Cam ship), OCEAN FREEDOM, HONOMU, DANIEL MORGAN, JOHN WITHERSPOON, ALDERSDALE (Oiler), WINSTON SALEM, SILVER SWORD, DONBASS (Russian), TROUBADOUR, WILLIAM HOOPER, RATHLEN, ZAMALEK, ZAAFARAN, the last three being rescue ships. The memories that come back as I write these down from my notes.....!

The screening escort was a mixed bag of Destroyers KEPPEL, WILTON, OFFA, LEAMINGTON, FURY and LEDBURY. These were later to leave the convoy and join the cruiser squadron on order to scatter the convoy. These were under the command of Cmdr. Broome, whom on leaving the convoy signalled back to all his charges he was leaving behind, "Sorry to leave you like this, good luck, looks like being a bloody business". Then steamed westward at full speed. The only escorts left then were the corvettes LOTUS, POPPY, LA MALOUINE and DIANELLA. The mine-sweepers BRITAMART, SALAMANDER and HALCYON. The trawlers A/S LORD MIDDLETON, LORD AUSTIN, NORTHERN GEM and AYRSHIRE. The two A.A. ships PALOMARES and POZARICA. Two small submarines P 614 and P 615 that were being built for Turkey at the beginning of the war but were commissioned into the R.N., which quite with reason, dived during enemy action. Also, strangely enough, amongst all these, one lone 40ft. R.A.F. type rescue launch! I wonder what happened to it during events that followed?

At 2100 hrs on the 4th July NORFOLK launched her Walrus plane on her three hour patrol, that was to be about 10 - 15 miles ahead of the convoy. The crew, in my notes, were Lieutenant Wignall, Sub-Lieutenant Riley and Leading Airman Gibbons. Three hours, did I say? It, was to be many months before they were to see NORFOLK again. Whilst they were on patrol, unknown to them, (everything below was as it should be) decisions were being made as to the scattering of the convoy and for the Cruiser Squadron and Destroyers and also the Destroyer screen from the convoy to withdraw westward at high speed. NORFOLK had sent out a signal recalling her Walrus but for reasons unknown, Gibbons had heard nothing over his W/T, probably because they were flying low under heavy mist. NORFOLK presuming that they had been shot down or had made a forced landing and unable to wait and search, continued on her course at high speed.

To the crew of the Walrus, everything seemed to be as it should be and the monotony of that patrol was, in incredible contrast to the terrible events that were spreading over thousands of square miles of ocean. About midnight they

started to steer a course to where, by their dead reckoning, NORFOLK should be. On arrival at that point they found the sea below the mist, completely bare of ships. Oh God! An A.S.V. search was started and some ships were finally sighted. A scatter had started and these were some of the convoy, but no sign of NORFOLK. Nothing like the ordered convoy they had seen at the start of their patrol. Asking by Aldis lamp, from one of the small escorts, the whereabouts of NORFOLK, a reply as to the direction flashed back, but three hours steaming at 30 knots had taken NORFOLK out of range of their A.S.V. With fuel, now very low, a gamble lay in both directions. To the west they may never catch up, or find NORFOLK, so a decision was made to steer east, where the chance was better of making it to the scattered convoy. They were at this time, unaware of the break up of the convoy. When fuel was almost zero, they picked up an echo on the screen and in a few minutes, there loomed up ahead, out of the mist, HMS PALOMARES. With their last few drops of fuel and a prayer, they put her into a glide, hoping that the fuel would last. It must have scared the living daylight out of them when we opened fire. Checking quickly that their identification signal was switched on, Wignall brought her down in the calm sea alongside PALOMARES and quite sure that they would have to swim for it, in a freezing sea and with heavy flying kit. However, PALOMARES had stopped and streamed a line astern, that they fished up with a large boat hook. As the warp was large and too thick for the small bollards on the bow of the Walrus, it was dragged inside the cockpit, where it was secured to the base of the control column. After securing everything down, as best as possible, we took the crew on board and with great haste, got under way again at full speed.

The Walrus air crew were in a blazing temper over the fact, they thought they were being fired on by us. What had really happened was, that coming close behind them was a Blom & Vos flying boat, that was always shadowing the convoy and always out of range, except this time, he was looking for an easy kill, no doubt. Although gratitude and praise was shown for being picked up without even getting wet and for being on board ship again, it was said later that they had descended from a calm sunlit heaven to a hell below. Now the destruction of PQ17 began to get into its stride.

On the morning of July 4th the P.O. Signals came dashing down into the mess, during a lull in action stations (some ships had already been sunk) to tell us "The bloody Yanks are surrendering, they are all pulling their flags down". It later transpired that we had forgotten it was their Independence Day and if as by some prearranged signal, all hoisted bright new Stars and Stripes. What a tear jerker it was to some of us. A good many of them had sailed from the west coast American ports down the Pacific, through Panama, up to Norfolk, Virginia or New York, then Atlantic convoy to Britain then to Iceland. Now after many weeks at sea and nearing their destination, Murmansk or Archangel, so many were to be sunk either by U-boat or aircraft. How can I possibly tell you, in a few pages of writing, the tragic events over the days and nights of non stop attacks from both U-boats and aircraft that took place.

In one four hour action, we fired 1,780 rounds of 4.7 shells, it was almost impossible to walk along the decks, for empty shell cases, both 4.7 and 40mm. The ammo was not coming up from the magazines quickly enough, so we chippys were busy making wooden shell racks on the gun decks for ready supply. All this time we were heading on a zig zag course for the shelter of Matochkin Straits between the two islands of Novaya Zemlya, along with one or two ships who chose to or could keep up with us. Other ships had chosen their own course and now were all over the ocean. The corvettes and trawlers were busy answering distress calls and picking up survivors, where possible, some steaming as far north as possible, up against the ice barrier, gaining some protection from U-boats on their port side. At last temporary sanctuary was found in the dreary and desolate Matochkin Straits, largely unexplored, inhabited only by a few settlers and trappers.

Incredibly, the Walrus was safely in tow, astern of us. A launch was put

HOW I 'VOLUNTEERED' FOR THE RUSSIAN RUN.

by Maurice Cross.

out from the shore of the Lagerne settlement filled with Russian soldiers, no interpreters were available but they all recognised the flags. This now, was the 7th July. No ships in any other convoy had sailed so far north and so far east. There was no aircraft carrier in the convoy, but we did have a plane 'of sorts' and this was quickly refuelled from one of the other ships, then prepared for a reconnaissance flight along the straits, to see if there was a passage through to the Kara Sea. Along its fifty mile length there were, in 1942, only three sparsely inhabited settlements. Lagerni on its western end, Matshar Radio Station and the Polar Geophysical Laboratory at its north-eastern end. It was this inhospitable passage through from the Barents Sea into the Kara Sea that most of the escort vessels and merchant ships had independantly set course after the scattering of PQ 17. It seemed so unlikely that the German battleships or even their destroyers would be able to follow them through the Straits to the Kara Sea.

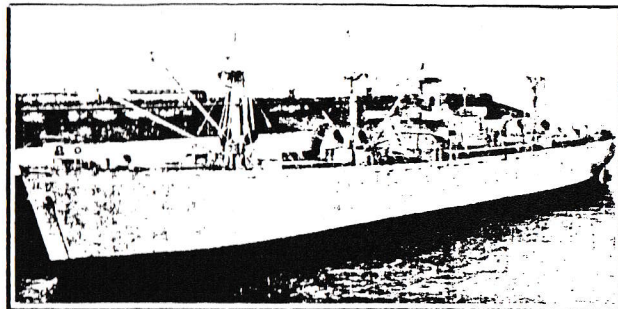
The Walrus, on its return, brought the news that there was indeed, no passage, as the Straits were blocked by ice. The ships that had made the safe landfall, now numbered seventeen but unfortunately only five were merchant ships. The others, if not sunk, were out in the Barents Sea. These seventeen were now reorganised by the senior captain, J.H. Jauncey of PALOMARES (who was later awarded the D.S.O. for his part) and sailed soon after for the White Sea, still four steaming days away. Wignall, Rilet and Gibbons took passage for the last leg in one of the minesweepers, as most ships by now had each a share of survivors, we had forty.

Our journey to and down the White Sea continued with air and submarine attacks. With the welcome respite given by banks of fog or ice floes, some of the ships, on the orders of AYRSHIRES skipper had painted as much of the ships starboard as was possible, with white paint. This had been supplied by TROUBADOUR, who had quite a large supply (what for? no one knew). TROUBADOUR had managed to paint the whole ship from stem to stern, hatches, deck cargo and most of the superstructure. There were plenty of willing hands from the survivors that all the ships carried. I remember thinking, "Where did all the paint brushes come from?" Probably part of the cargo. PALOMARES was carrying twenty-one cases of Whisky, destined for the British Consul in Archangel. Finally, after many days and nights of air and submarine attacks we arrived at Archangel in late July. The Walrus, stripped of its gun and radar set, was loaded onto a flat car on the dockside, the Russians probably thinking it was part of the allied supply programme. We ourselves, were to stay in Archangel for about three months, no ammo for the return trip, it was all expended. Convoy sailings, because of the great losses (34 out of 38) were curtailed for some weeks after this.

I wonder what happened to 'THE WALRUS' Does anyone know?

Perhaps she is still flying up and down the Arctic looking for NORFOLK!

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Liberty Ship 'JEREMIAH O'BRIEN' at San Francisco was the venue of an Armed Guard Reunion last May.

How bored can you get? I asked myself, as I took the ferry from Felixstowe to Harwich for the umpteenth time that month.

Because of numerous breakdowns, my ageing MTB flotilla had paid off a couple of months ago. Most of the crews were absorbed by other flotillas, but Signalmen were only carried on Senior Officers boats (the Sparks had to cope on other boats) so in vain I hung about the base, waiting for an S.O.'s boat. For a time I helped out in the S.D.O. under the beady eye of a man-hating Chief Wren - so I soon got cheesed off with that.

Then I discovered the perfect skive - simply take the inter-docks ferry from Felixstowe to Harwich & Parkstone Quay. Then saunter ashore in each little port, visit the canteens, read the 'Blighty', drink a few hundred cups of tea and perhaps pay a visit to an old friend of mine, aboard a paddle-wagon Estuary A.A. guardship, which seemed to be permanently alongside. All this was going on, when lots of you poor sods were commuting between Scapa and the Kola, experiencing various stages of nervous breakdowns - I can only say "your 'orrible luck Jack"

The only immediate cloud on my horizon was the niggling fear that there would be a vacancy for a bunting tosser on Lieut. Commdr. Hitchen's MGB. He was a very gallant and fearless Flotilla leader (DSO and bar, DSC and 2 bars) who casually took on E-boats three at a time - which meant, of course, that he and his crew were not terribly good insurance risks. (He was killed off the Dutch coast in 1943). Fortunately the Lie. t. Commdr's bunting tosser was lasting the course and looking quite fit every time I anxiously looked out for him, when his boat came in from patrol.

But all this frigging about on ferries, drinking gallons of NAAFI tea and dodging RPOs, gradually took toll and finally, in a fit of patriotic fervour after seeing Noel Cowards 'In Which We Serve', coupled with increasing boredom, I requested to be transferred back to General Service. Once again I took up residence in Jago's Mansions in Guz, until one fateful day I heard the pipe "Signalman Cross report to the Drafting Office". "You've got the SEAGULL" the draft bloke said, "she's a Sweeper". "Ah" I thought, "that'll be nice - just trundling up and down the English Coast, ashore every other night, with a pint in one hand and a red-headed wanton in the other.

"Where is she based Chief?" "Scapa" he said, "I think she's on the Russian Run, but now she's having a refit in Leith!" "THE RUSSIAN RUN! NOT THE RUSSIAN RUN CHIEF!!" I clutched the window flap for support, the chief affirmed, "you'll enjoy the fresh air". I lurched away mentally picturing mountainous seas crashing over ice-covered decks, with tin-fish roaring about like shoals of herring. I decided to raise my morale by enjoying the ministrations of Miss Betty Grable flinging it all about in a Hollywood musical - so off I went to a Plymouth cinema. All was well until the Newsreel started. It had condensed all the action highlights of a complete Murmansk convoy into about four hair-raising minutes. Rivetted to my seat, I watched aghast as Stukas screamed down in all directions, torpedo bombers barrelled across the waves, tin-fish leaping about like dolphins. High level Focke Wolfes chucked it down, the air was thick with shell bursts, streams of tracers, hurtling bombs and columns of spray raising from near-misses. Billowing smoke rose from shattered ships, as survivors struggled in the icy sea.

"Bloody Hell!" I moaned, groping my way out into Union Street, "Bloody Hell! what have I done? what have I done? why didn't I stay in Felixstowe, I might have spent the rest of the war quietly chugging over to Harwich and back - too late! too bloody late!" Into the Long Bar I staggered, only to meet an old Signal School oppo, who had a nice easy billet on Berry Head coast-guard station and whose main war-effort appeared to be staying awake on watch and keeping his L. & P.A. landlady's daughter happy. He laughed like a Chief Stoker when he heard of my draft, "Your 'orrible luck mate" he chortled.

So with kitbag and hammock I was away to Bonnie Scotland, and what a welcome - I hadn't been aboard 24 hours before some light-fingered dockyard matey had half-inched my Burberry. But I had a great time in Edinburgh. Far from the bomb-blasted South, it had almost a peacetime atmosphere. I met some lovely Scottish lassies and sank a gratifying quantity of McEwans and Younger's Best. All good things come to an end and much too soon I found myself looking at the slate-coloured, rain-sodden town of Stromness as the SEAGULL steamed past the Scapa boom defence.

Scapa - they called it "Home Fleet"?? If that's the Admiralty's idea of 'Home', where is their 'Foreign'? - somewhere east of Mars? Scapa - land of the constant drizzle and the permanent bitter wind, with an attendant shower of shitehawks wheeling and shrieking and nagging for gash. No trees on these storm-lashed islands - except when a shore-based matelot brought one back from the mainland, planted it and erected a sign 'The Only Tree In Scapa'. It withered and died and blew down of course, so the matelot hammered a post into the barren soil, nailed his lifeless tree to it, with a new sign 'Still the only tree in Scapa'. Scapa - with its tin Fleet Canteen, the floor swilling in beer, where you bought a string of tickets at the entrance, hung them round your neck and exchanged them for pints at the bar. Hoping to gain an alcoholic nirvana, you downed a gallon of dodgy Naafi beer and either joined in, or shouted above, about 20 different sing-songs, drunken monologues and the occasional stoned matelot dancing on the table in his under-pants...God rest their desperate souls. I suppose it was just 'Jack' trying to drown the clinging terror of his next Kola Run.

I made one big error when I joined SEAGULL. I forgot that my N° 1's cap-ribbon bore the legend in flaming gold "H.M. M.T.B." It took quite some time to live that down...."Stand back men, give him sea-room, here comes the MTB ace, King of the High Seas" etc.. It didn't help much when, on the first day out of Iceland, I heaved up my dinner into the North Atlantic. "Well my son" said our old stripey as I hung over the side "You're on the real 'oggin now, not poncing about the Channel on your MTB - what you need is half a bucket of pussers peas, washed down with a jugful of pork fat...ah!ah! gurg! splosh!

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AN APPEAL FROM CANADA

Submitted for N.L. by Tom Ponder.

The new Dominion President of The Royal Canadian Legion is Fred Williams, 68, of St. John's, Newfoundland, who served with the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

"I served abroad both HMS *Diomedé* and HMS *Tracker* - two years on *Diomedé* - and I made some wonderful friends, people I'd love to see again." says Mr Williams.

"During my last trip to the UK I spent a lot of time and money trying to track some of the lads down, but all I knew for certain was they lived in the north, around Newcastle. That's not really much to go on, considering all the small places they could possibly have settled in. If any of them can get in contact with me I guarantee I'll try to come and see them the next time I'm over."

First elected a Dominion vice-president in 1984. Mr Williams has held many key positions, including Chairman of the Membership and Veterans Service Committees. He has also served as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Veterans Benefits.

His election as Dominion President caps four decades of Royal Canadian Legion service.

Friends and shipmates may contact Fred Williams by writing to 226 Airport Hgts. Drive, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1A 4X2.

Come on all you 'TRACKER's get pens to paper and write to Fred Williams.

Editor

MEMBER'S LETTERS

From John Gilhooly
(Mid Lothian, Scotland.)

Myself and four brothers were all invited to Eng. Comdr. and Mrs Gordon McLaren's daughter's wedding at St Ann's Church, H.M. Naval Base Portsmouth on 22nd September 1990. The wedding was a grand affair and the R.N. church held happy memories but otherwise I was very sad. Portsmouth was a strange city built on the old Pompey I remembered. I lost my way twice trying to find HMS Nelson (the old Victory Barracks, no Aggie Weston's, no sausage, egg and chips at the R.N. club, none of the old bars, and I gave up trying to find Whale Island half way along a major road.



I did find Wright and Logan's shop, opposite the R.N.B., HMS Nelson, but was unable to purchase the many photos I wanted, due to the price, (95p each!). I am hoping to complete an album or albums on the R.N. in WW". At the moment I have typed up a few actions, a few of them taking place in the Med. and North Sea, but most of them in Norway and Russian Convoys. If anyone can loan me post-cards or photos of WW2 warships so I can have copies made, I would be most grateful.

Thank you all kindly.

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From Cliff (Stormy) Fairweather
(Colchester)

Cliff's letter gives detailed reports of reunions etc. which he has organised for crew members of HMS Westcott. Unfortunately space only permits me to quote from the letter (Editor)

"During my search for ex-crew members I have been in contact with an officer who served on WESTCOTT in June 1918, and I have had some wonderful tales from him. Captain Brian de Courcy-Ireland also served on NEWCASTLE 1940-1941 and commanded AJAX for two years 1946-1948".

"The idea of the reunion at Westcott village in Surrey, was to say 'Thank You' for their presents during the war, but alas there was a shortage of villagers. However we had a very good week end".

"We had a raffle, the main prize was a holiday for two in Jersey - won by - Guess who? - yes 'Stormy' himself. At least he promised to send everyone a postcard".

Stormy also quotes from a letter he received from a Westcott shipmate - Ron Blacker. "You asked if we used to receive parcels from Westcott Village. Well, this is a very sore point with my memory, the reason being, that myself, (then a P.O.) and the Buffer, P.O. Dan Godfrey, together with a few hands and a couple of officers, were left onboard at Portsmouth in December 1942, when the ship paid off. We were to tie up the final strings as usual before going on leave just before Xmas. When we cleared out one of the storage compartments below decks, Dan and I found thousands of cigarettes (Not a very good brand), but nevertheless cigarettes that had been sent by the village and by the school-children for the crew. They had never been issued. They were in boxes in a crate and the boxes had printed notes on them saying, in the case of the school-children, that they had been donated by the children bringing pennies to school each day to pay for them." "I do not ever recollect any of them being issued. Who was responsible I don't know, but the blame must have lain with either the Supply Officer, the Coxswain or the Canteen Manager".

MORE MEMBER'S LETTERS

From Derek Wellman
East Sussex.

We seem to have crossed wires over the pieces contributed to Northern Light. I sent you three pieces about ONSLOW, you printed one under my name which is fair enough: I also sent you a piece from Nobby Grant in New Zealand about OFFA in which he served when ONSLOW was knocked out by HIPPER. Unfortunately it appears under my name rather than his. My ONSLOW mates will take a dim view of that, since I wasn't aboard OFFA and didn't in fact join ONSLOW until after her refit in April '43. I was going to ignore it but one of them has written to me in somewhat uncomplimentary terms thinking that I had whipped someone else's story.

The editor offers sincere apologies to Derek Wellman and to Nobby Grant in New Zealand, but certainly not to the so-called shipmate who could be uncomplimentary about the slip-up. Derek, these little errors are bound to occur now and again - BUT WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA!

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From 'Johno' Johnson
Barrow in Furness

I enclose items which I feel may be appreciated by our shipmates who travelled on the far North run. I can recount many stories of experiences as I spent most of the war moving northwards from Scapa, as I served on CHARIBDIS, JAMAICA, INGLEDFIELD, MAHARATTA and finally SEARCHER.

Here is one of the items:

THE RAID TO CRIPPLE THE TIRPITZ

I was serving on the Escort Carrier SEARCHER from 2nd October '43 until 1st July '45. During this time, if my memory serves me correctly, it was in December '43, three carriers, FURIOUS, STRIKER and SEARCHER left Scapa heading North, these ships had the usual escort of destroyers, and we were aware that several cruisers were at sea too. Eventually the course changed to the East, we knew then that we were heading into hot waters. The weather was very good to us, our planes were flying sorties every day. We now get wind of our objective, we are nearing the area of Alten Fiord, here lay the TIRPITZ, the 'buzzes went round the ship, - they were spot on, she was the target.

Twenty four hours before the time for Action, the crew of SEARCHER were laid low with an epidemic of Diarrhoea, (I can vouch that it was not due to fear) the story being that we had 'yeast poisoning'. The day for action dawned, of the three carriers, FURIOUS and STRIKER carried Avenger bombers, SEARCHER, Hellcats and Wildcats of 882 Squadron. The first flight took to the air at first light, these were our fighters, their objective being to destroy such defences as they could find, thus to enable the bombers of the other ships to press home their attack. I would record here that the reports of our pilots after the completion of the attack were amazing reading. We watched the Avengers take off from our force, then sent in our second wave of fighters, As they left us we started to land on our first wave, making them ready for any emergency, (we expected some kind of retaliation).

Within a short space of time the other two carriers were receiving their planes, even as we watched nine planes were lost from FURIOUS, a bad landing resulted in these being sent over the side. Suddenly we realised that our ship had lost steerage way, she was laying dead in the water. The last of our planes was diverted to FURIOUS. The attack having been delivered, and so successfully,, the rest of the force made all speed to leave the area. SEARCHER lay still in the water. our crew gazing at the ice covered shore very reminiscent of the white cliffs of Dover, but nowhere near as comforting at that time. Suddenly the cruiser JAMAICA arrived, (an old ship of mine, I had commissioned her in Barrow). I found myself walking around the ship stating that we would be O.K. JAMAICA would look after us - and I believed it too! We started to move slowly

through the water, temporary repairs had been effected after several nerve racking hours. The one thing I have always queried in my own mind, was the fact that after such a devastating attack, the enemy did not send out any air or surface reconnaissance in order to define either the strength or manner of the attacking forces. I am grateful that they did not.

SEARCHER did make it back to Scapa, thence across to America for engine repairs. Before concluding however I would like to point out that SEARCHER and her planes of 8882 Squadron were also in at the kill of the TIRPITZ. She provided the fighter cover for the Lancasters which completed the job which started all those months previously, this was never mentioned in the press reports. No wonder the Navy was referred to as the Silent Service.

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A short excerpt from a long letter - the rest of the letter is being retained in the 'Ready-Use Locker':-

From Bill Thomas
Bridgwater.

...may I write a little praise for the most underated ambassador in the person of my old 'skip' Captain Derek Wyburd DSO, DSC, RN, Rtd, - the greatest of all men, a diehard - his men were his life. The late Bill Loades and his mate who had been 'fixed' for supposedly nicking a cap, could have had years of hard labour but for his intervention and determination. He was more than responsible for the men of the convoys' comfort and relaxation on arrival at Archangel - but for him there would have been no shore leave, such was the regime. Thank you Captain - you saved my bacon more than once but twice. I served happily under you in Naval Party 200 and in the good old URSA of the 25th Destroyer Flotilla, finishing up in Yokahama. The North Russia Club is proud that you endorsed the pamphlet for the Arctic Zone Medal and we thank you for this. You may be ageing but aren't we all? You deserve more acclamation than you've got'' Without you in North Russia, I think it would have been more than Hell - I am suse that the rest of Naval Party 200 will endorse that to the full.

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From Peter Allen
Ottery St Mary

I have heard from Julia V. Ostashchenko, whom a lot of members met during two visits to the Teachers Training College in Murmansk. She is now teaching Modern Soviet History and the Russian language at Jacksonville University. If anyone cares to write to her she is at 3500 University Boulevard North, 2805, Jacksonville, Florida 32211, U.S.A.

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From Arthur Bartle, DSM
Portslade, Brighton

I recently received this letter which I am sure will interest members:-
Dear Arthur,

Just by chance I was given some back editions of the magazine called 'Yours', I got so interested in them that when I saw the section for 'OLD COMRADES' in the March issue that contained your advertisement I was really pleased. But before I go on I had better introduce myself...as you can see I'm Bill Bates and I was a telegraphist aboard HMS GOODALL until she was torpedoed on the 29th April 1945, a day, no doubt you will recall with as much nostalgia as I.

I must explain that since my discharge from the RN in 1948, I have been a chronic agoraphobic and unable to travel or have much of a social life, therefore, contact through Navy clubs has not been possible. I did not even know of the existance of the Navy News until the same person who gave me the copies of 'Yours' also found some back copies of those too. Now, of course I have a subscription to both and have made some remarkable contacts, including some old shipmates and crew members of sister ships that were lost or survived the war in our Group. The one thing I've always prayed that I would be able to do, was

to say thank you for what your lads did for us that day. I know its taken me seven months to pluck up courage to write, and forty-five years to find where to direct my thanks. but the Good Lord has been kind, and now if I get stuck for words it will only be that there really are no words adequate to express how I feel. Maybe then, if I just say "THANKS OPPTS" you will know exactly what it means.

When GOODALL was hit I was trapped in the emergency wireless cabinet amidst ships, and as this was only about three feet square, the water that came from a fractured main mixed with battery acid and I could hardly breathe and my eyes felt as if they were burning. As the lights went out and the extra gear stowed in the cabinet was flung all over the place I very quickly became disorientated. I have no idea how the door suddenly opened but when it did I saw the fire was only feet away and men, or parts of men, were lying on the deck outside. I stayed for as long as I could with a wounded man but not being able to get far forward or aft because of the fire and ammo exploding, I was ordered over the side with the wounded man. I know we were the last to leave by floatnet and the sea fire was very close. We joined up with another three men and managed to stay ahead of the flames but then, as I could hardly see or breathe I passed out. When I came to the others had gone and what brought me round was a rope falling across my head. When I managed to turn my head I saw the HONEYSUCKLE about twenty feet away but I was too far gone to fasten the rope so I rolled it round my arms and let go of the net. I just made it to your side when the rope came adrift, but somebody came over the side, down the scrambling net, into the water and hauled me inboard... It must have been an almost impossible task because I was six foot two and weighed well over twelve stone... As I lay on the deck another rating raised my head and said "I think this one has gone"... it took all my strength to open my eyes and let him know I wasn't!!

As you know we were treated like kings when we were taken below, lockers were opened, dry clothes came out, cigarettes, tots and blankets were showered on us. I fell asleep very quickly and when I was aroused we were mustered for transfer to VINDEX.

In all the confusion I never got a chance to say thank you to everyone on the HONEYSUCKLE, and to be honest, I've always had a conscience and it worried me until this day. But, again, how does one say adequate thanks for something like that? If I kept on writing from now until eternity it still would not be enough. As I said before, may I just say 'THANKS SHIPMATES' and hope you will understand.

I have often wondered if the man who pulled me inboard would remember me... and if he is still in touch with the lads and, I hope, fit and healthy... I would love to pay him a personal thank you, for I am absolutely positive that if not for him I would have floated off. The only distinguishing pointers I can give is that I was wearing a very heavy 'Canadian lumber jacket' made out of tartan blankets (which was covered with oil), my lifebelt valve was stuck and was not inflated, I was well overdue for a haircut, and I was told I was the last to be picked up... I'm sure that as I was being pulled inboard your bows were aight.

I have a photograph of twenty-seven of the GOODALL survivors, the other two were in the sick bay with wounds and burns. Although I'm in touch with two at the moment, I'm certain that all would want me to convey their thanks and best wishes.....

Bill Bates.

Our grateful thanks to Arthur Bartle and Bill Bates for the privilege of being allowed to publish this wonderful letter.

Editor.

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OLD COMRADES ?

Does any ex-ONSLAUGHT, SEAGULL or HAIDA crew member remember a young Soviet Officer onboard? He was Nikolai Iylyev whom I met in Moscow last December. He is a retired Rear Admiral and is Director of UNIDO Group Training. I have his home address.

ARCTIC CAMPAIGN MEMORIAL TRUST

Registered Charity N°. 802671



MURMANSK MEMORIAL: The Mayor of Murmansk, after some long and tiring negotiations in Murmansk City Hall, agreed to fund the production of a seven foot high memorial and site it in a prominent position in the city, near to the Railway Station and the Swimming Pool. To keep to his side of the agreement, the Mayor insisted that a working drawing should be in his offices within one month. The British Embassy in Moscow said that because of the Christmas Holidays we would have three working days to get our plans and letter into the Diplomatic bag in London. On arrival back in London, through one of our committee members, it was possible after much phoning and cajoling to get an Architect to draw from my rough sketches a set of working drawings over the week-end. These were despatched in the Diplomatic bag to Moscow and our contact there put them on the plane to Murmansk, well within the time limits agreed. The Editor has produced a copy of the drawings (on Page 33) to give you some idea what the memorial will be like. Black local Granite with lettering indented and copper filled, will be polished. The Arctic Tern logo will be in white and blue local stone, also polished. The inscription will be in English on one side and in Russian on the reverse. The memorial will be set in a concrete base.....this is the first, others will follow.

EXCHANGE VISITS: It was possible to visit a number of classrooms and work with children of various ages in Murmansk School 51, (their schools are all numbered and not named). From this, agreement was reached to start our first Exchange Visits from there. The skill the children have with the English language is truly remarkable and I promised the Teachers to make available names of children from seven to fifteen years old, who would like to would like to become pen-friends. These are lovely children, so if you have grand-children who would like to write, I will let you have the names.

PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: One of our ACMT members is negotiating for a new stained glass window, to have the Arctic Campaign Plaque incorporated in it. We are investigating the possibility of raising the funds locally and through club members. This is a unique opportunity to acquire a fine Arctic Campaign memorial in the Cathedral of the Navy's historical home port (and a town with many links with the other Services). If you have any ideas how you can help, would you please let us know.

A.C.M.T. SLOPS: I am getting a reasonable request list together now, so we will shortly be placing an order for some items, those people who have placed orders will be notified of prices when we have them to hand. My three objectives are, quality....reasonable prices....and a unique design exclusive to Arctic Veterans and families.

BLUE NOSE CERTIFICATES: If you are entitled to claim your right to one of these you will be pleased to know that I have had some very nice NEW coloured certificates printed. The colours are very rich and permanent. Your name will be inscribed by a skilled calligrapher and with postage and packing included free of charge, they are priced at £5.50. Overseas price is £6.00. If you crossed the Arctic Circle, Lat. 60°30'N. you are entitled. Send your Title, very clearly printed, with your address and cheque, postal order, money order or cash to: R.J. Wren, 13 Sherwood Avenue, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 2LD. made payable to NORTH RUSSIA CLUB.

A PLAQUE FROM HMS COURAGEOUS: Len Phillips who has done so much for ACMT has a ship's plaque. He will be happy to pass it on, in exchange for a donation to the Fund. His address:- 8 Redgate, The Pippins, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4TQ

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE FUND since the last publication:

CRASTON R.C.	NRC
PHILLIPS W.L.	NRC In lieu of floral presentation to Mrs Phillips by Northwich RNA.
LEWIS CHARINGTON ASSOCIATES	Contribution from sale of Sound tapes to NRC members.
WREN R.J. & J.	Payment for two Alma Phillips Sailor Dolls.
SQUIRES R.D.	NRC Sale of photographs.
GLEESON W.	NRC Sale of photographs.
GRIST F.	NRC
PHILLIPS Mrs A.	Sale of Sailor Dolls.
PHILLIPS Len & Alma.	NRC
MITCHELL T.M.	Friend of NRC member.
ASTELLS F.G.	Friend of NRC member.
FARNHAM R.C.	R.C.C.
SQUIRES R.D.	Beer Mug Sleeve collection at ship's reunion.
SQUIRES R.D.	NRC Result of Raffle (Merseyside members on HMS Eaglet.
RYAN W.	NRC (U.S.Merchant Marine Veteran)
MASTERS S.	NRC
HARRIS W.	NRC Tribute to friend who had 'Crossed the Bar'.
BEILEY Mrs I.L.	NRC Widow of the late L.V. Beiley.
WATTS W.J.	
KEEN L.	NRC
PHILLIPS W.L. & A.	NRC Collection from 17th Destroyer Flotilla Reunion.
HALL-WRIGHT D.G.D.	via Lloyds Bank, Potters Bar.
MORRIS Mrs Eileen.	Passenger on flight from Lanzarote.
BROOKE Dennis	NRC
COOLEY R & B.	NRC
ROBSON E.C.	NRC
FOSTER J.W.	NRC
COLLIS C.T., Mrs B. & L.	NRC
MADDERN J.	NRC
WEAKLEY K.	NRC
LAWRENCE Pat.	B.A. Steward on Moscow flight 6/12/90.
PHILLIPS W.L. & A.	NRC
ROGERS Stan.	NRC Friend of member.
CONLEY Sid.	NRC In memory of Les Lawrence.

You have all been very generous and on behalf of the Committee and Trustees I want to thank you all. If the value of our Murmansk Monument is added to our assets, we have a credit balance of approximately £52,000 in assets.
Best Wishes and kind regards.

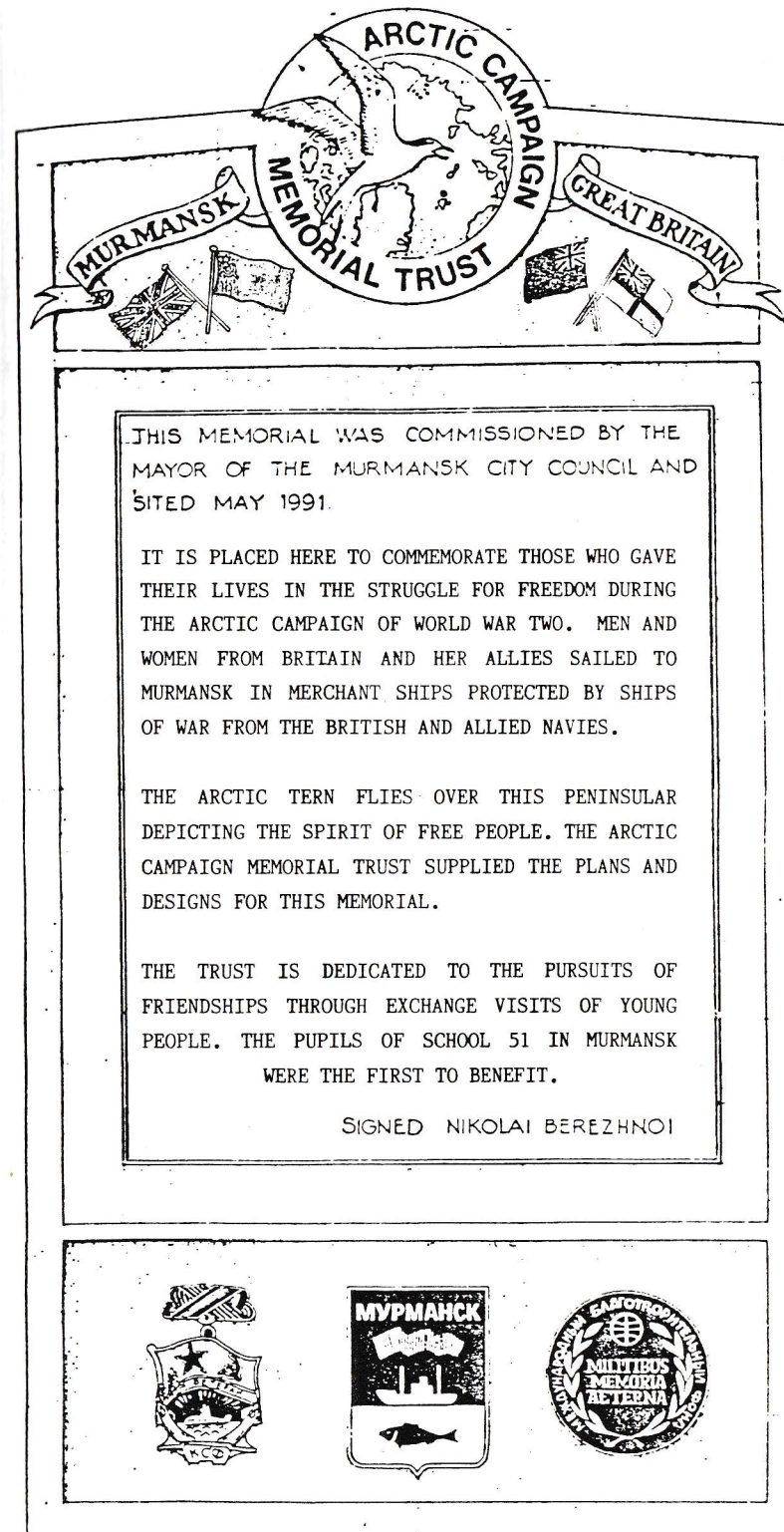
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"ETERNAL MEMORY TO SOLDIERS This Soviet Non-Governmental Charity Fund continues to work very closely with our own Arctic Campaign Memorial Trust. During the visit of Dick Squires and Ron Wren in December a series of meetings were held with them, both in Moscow and Murmansk. They invited the Trust to become a member of the co-sponsors of Eternal Memory to Soldiers and an agreement was drawn up and signed, with the following aims:

- Creation of joint memorials to the participants of the Northern Convoys.
- Exchange of delegations of World War Two veterans and members of their families.
- Joint carrying out of charitable actions.
- Establishing business co-operation between the organisations of "Eternal Memory to Soldiers" and "Arctic Campaign Memorial Trust".

The Soviet Fund was set up by Andrei Sakharov just before his death and now has a Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Mufti of General Asia, a Roman Catholic and Lutheran Clergymen and two participants of the Great Patriotic War amongst the panel of Guardians.

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THIS MEMORIAL WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE MAYOR OF THE MURMANSK CITY COUNCIL AND SITED MAY 1991.

IT IS PLACED HERE TO COMMEMORATE THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM DURING THE ARCTIC CAMPAIGN OF WORLD WAR TWO. MEN AND WOMEN FROM BRITAIN AND HER ALLIES SAILED TO MURMANSK IN MERCHANT SHIPS PROTECTED BY SHIPS OF WAR FROM THE BRITISH AND ALLIED NAVIES.

THE ARCTIC TERN FLIES OVER THIS PENINSULAR DEPICTING THE SPIRIT OF FREE PEOPLE. THE ARCTIC CAMPAIGN MEMORIAL TRUST SUPPLIED THE PLANS AND DESIGNS FOR THIS MEMORIAL.

THE TRUST IS DEDICATED TO THE PURSUITS OF FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH EXCHANGE VISITS OF YOUNG PEOPLE. THE PUPILS OF SCHOOL 51 IN MURMANSK WERE THE FIRST TO BENEFIT.

SIGNED NIKOLAI BEREZHNOI

Height:
1800 cm.
7'approx

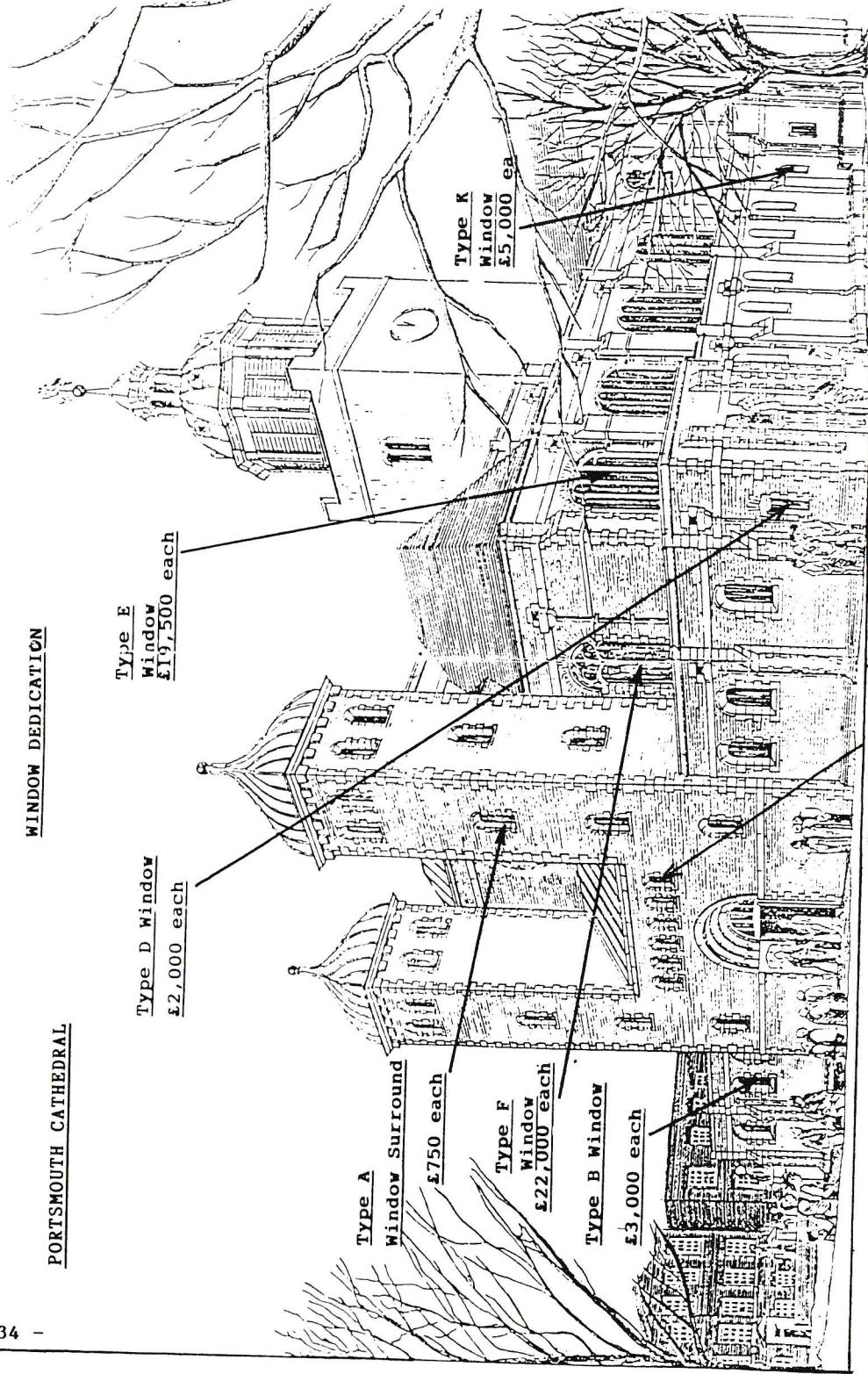
Width
900 cm.
3'6"approx

MATERIAL
Black polished
local granite.

Arctic Tern
logo white
and blue
polished local
stone.

Flags, badges
and scrolls
are raised on
the granite
slabs.

Lettering and
trims indented
and filled with
copper.



PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL

WINDOW DEDICATION

ROLL CALL

"Home is the Sailor, Home from the Sea"

R. I. P.
It is with deepest regret that we inform you that the following Shipmates have "Crossed the Bar"

TOM SMITHSON	NAIRANA	Didsbury, Manchester
DON BRAGG	OBEDIENT	Exeter
GENE CARROLL	ARGONAUT	Bromley, Kent
DON STANFORD	WOODCOCK	Southend-on-Sea
A. SHAW	SHROPSHIRE	Frome, Somerset

.....

SATURDAY 26th OCTOBER: The Annual Reunion Dinner has been moved from South Normanton this year. It will now take place at the **Granby Hotel**, Granby Road, Harrogate HG1 4SR, Yorkshire. Full details and booking forms will be included in the June edition of Northern Light. Interim enquiries can be made with Les Jones on 0257 791632.

REMEMBRANCE WEEK-END 7th to 10th November: Full details of attendance at the Field of Remembrance and the Cenotaph March will be published in the Northern Light following committee decisions on attendance.

.....

TOURS TO MURMANSK & ARCHANGEL 1991.

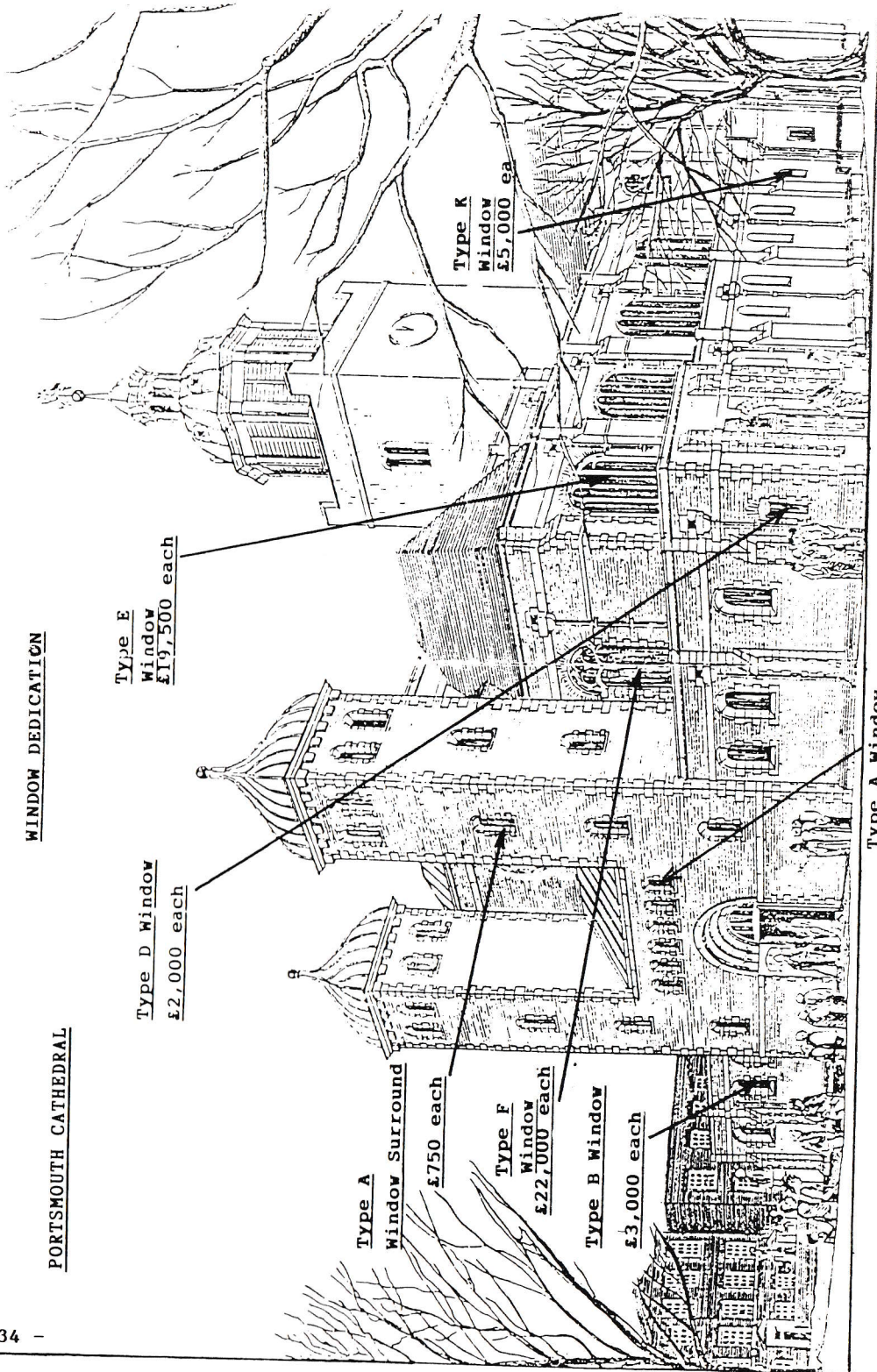
Due to various unresolved problems regarding the tours I was obliged to visit Murmansk in mid-December - cold, dark and very friendly - and no shortage of food and drink. The outcome of several rounds of meetings and discussions with the City Council Executive Committee, Soviet War Veterans of the Murmansk and Northern Fleet branches and with the charity 'Eternal Memory to Soldiers' was most rewarding and made the pre-Christmas journey worthwhile. The outcome was:- **May 4th to May 11th:** Tour to Murmansk is definitely on. Two bonuses, this year we will make a day trip to Polyarnoe (I wonder if the wooden jetty is still there!), the second is that providing bookings are high enough Aeroflot will fly us direct from U.K. to Murmansk - many of you have requested this over the years. If the numbers are not correct we will have our usual overnight stops in Moscow &/or Leningrad. The cost will be approx £575 for full board and all travel by air. Costs can be reduced if you choose to live with an English speaking family in Murmansk. I have a list of 31 approved families.

At the request of the Soviet organisers we have cancelled the proposed October visit and rearranged the dates to the end of August. This will coincide with two three-day Festivals to mark the 50th anniversary of the first convoy. In Murmansk the festival will commence on 26th August and in Archangel on 30th August. The Northern Fleet Veterans and 'Eternal Memory' are desperately trying to organise a **"Dervish '91"** Celebration & Thanksgiving Convoy from U.K. to the two ports. The convoy would include a Soviet passenger liner that we can use, plus other vessels both naval and merchant marine. Quite apart from the current world situation, time is the greatest enemy. However, if you require to be kept updated on this and are not already on the N.R.C.Tours mailing list please notify me (051 487 9567). Many of you may not wish to travel by sea for a number of reasons, maybe costs, time, disability or mal-de-mer. So we have provisionally booked air travel to coincide with the Festival dates. **Dont forget - The club are not organising a tour in 1992 as announced on Page 2.**

.....

SUBS! SUB! SUBS! - NO NOT A U-BOAT ALARM - JUST A REMINDER ABOUT SUBSCRIPTIONS!!

.....



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MORE BITS AND PIECES

Dear Shipmate Dick,

I believe that there are many of our Shipmate Members within the North Russia Club, possibly some who are not, so to be made aware of our existence would be appreciated. By the same token, we can reciprocate and tell our members about the North Russia Club. I would say that we have about 130 Shipmates who were involved in Russian Convoys.

Cheers Shipmate, smoothsailing at all times.

Alfred W. Fowler, Vice Pres. & General Secretary

For any 'Shiny's amongst our crew, Alf's address is 45 Woodcutters Avenue, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 4PN

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NORTH RUSSIA CLUB OFFICERS & COMMITTEE 1990-91.

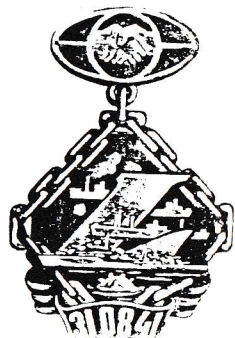


Standing (L to R) Dick Squires, Eric Rathbone, Norman Batchelor, Henry Baker and Chris Tye. Seated (L to R) Austin Byrne, Frank Green, Peter Skinner, Les Sullivan, Ron Wren, Don Allen, Mervyn Williams and Les Jones.

.....

THE PROPOSED SOVIET 50TH ANNIVERSARY MEDALLION

Applications for this proposed medallion have now closed. A list of more than 4000 names has been sent to our Moscow Embassy for collection by the Northern Fleet Headquarters. If your name was on the N.R.C. membership list on 31st December 1990, then your name is amongst those submitted.



"NAUTICAL ALPHABET"

(Or an O.D.'s guide to the Royal Navy).

Written by Bill Johnston way back in the 1950's.

- "A" is for anchor, all ships have them fitted,
- "B" stands for buntings, a few quite quick witted,
Its also for beer, which most matelots drink,
Or bosun, or buffer, both B's some will think,
- "C" is for chokker, a naval expression,
When linked up with crusher it causes depression,
- "D" must be draft chit, a bad one brings drips,
Its also defaulters to muster midships,
And duff's from the galley, some heavy as lead,
Oh, and poor dockyard matey's, who work till they're dead,
- "E" is for engines, or eats if they're big,
- "F" of course foreign, and tropical rig,
- "G" stands for gannets, they'll eat the mess bare,
And gash of course too, that's for rubbish or spare,
- "H" is your hammock, its use understood,
or hard lying money, both useful and good,
- "I" is inspection at divisions on Sunday,
Dont get picked up Jack, or you've had it on Monday,
- "J" stands for jankers and jaunty as well,
Both rather grim, and together just hell,
- "K" gives you killicks, the less said the better,
Its also for kye, and that's hotter and better,
- "L" brings you loafing, or leave with its charms,
- "M" well that's matelots and master at arms,
It can give you the middle, or bring make and mends,
Or maybe for Malta the Med. to defend,
- "N" leads to N.A.A.F.I. and nutty, what matter,
It's Navy and Nelson and ends up in natter,
- "O" must be officers, so varied, so many,
Scrub round them says Jack, we could do without any,
- "P" is patrolman, so grim and unfunny,
It brings in the paybob to dole out your money,
- "Q" is the quack, he'll take charge of your ills,
And in moments of stress dish you number nine pills,
- "R" yes its rum mate, with all its delights,
And its also for refit, I hope one's in sight,
- "S" for a smoke since its stand easy teatime,
Its scanbag as well and alas some more seatime,
And slops too and sippers, not gulpers you glower,
That brings us to stokers and they are quite a shower,
gives us ticklers and maybe your tot,
Telegraphist's too, crashing out dash and dot,
It's tanky as well, and tinfish by the score,
- "U" was for U-boats thank heavens no more,
will be Victualling, of that not a doubt,
- "W" for writers and warrants you shout,
Its also the wardroom but let's keep this polite,
Watchkeeping too, are you duty tonight?
And dont forget weekends and watertight doors,
And lets add the Wrens chum, a shrill voice implores,
- "X" is the x-ray in depot you had,
- "Y" Brings in the yeoman of signals my lad,
It also means you, I remembered in time,
So rollon your twelve mate, it helps this to rhyme,
- "Z" could be zig-zags, its the end, I've reached zero,
If you can do better ops then you're a hero,
I could add plenty more to this long winded caper,
But to tell you the truth, I've run right out of paper'

WELCOME ABOARD TO NEW SHIPMATES.

1128. BURTON Albert G. PEACOCK.
5 Yorke Avenue, Marchwiell, Nr. Wrexham, Clwydd LL13 OSG.
1129. WARES Edward J. AVENGER/TRACKER
14 Ash Road, Kingsteignton, Devon TQ12 3SX.
1130. RYAN William F. SS.MEANTICUTT/CAESAR RODNEY/ROBERT LOWRY
445 Grove Lane, Melbourne, Florida, U.S.A. 32901.
1131. VIEWING Gerald WRESTLER
116 Green Lanes, Westewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9UL
1132. ADAMS John CUMBERLAND
4 Ventnor Road, Filton, Bristol, Avon BS12 7HF
1133. GILLIGAN John STARLING
6 Redvers Drive Liverpool L9 8BT
1134. KING Wilfred OPPORTUNE
23 Pemberton Road, Blackhill, Consett, Co.Durham
1135. AVERY William OPPORTUNE
16 Richmond Avenue, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham DL14 6NQ
1136. SQUIRES John IMPULSIVE/SCYLLA
6 James Street, Bamber Bridge, Nr Preston PR5 6TH.
1137. MILNER Ernest (Bob) CUMBERLAND
51 Challis Court, King Street, Southampton SO1 1DQ
1138. BROOKER Arthur S.D. FORESTER
214 Turnpike Lane, East Croydon, Surrey CRO 5NZ
1139. RANDALL J.W. CALCUTTA
8 The Oval, Bicton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 8EW
1140. QUANTOCK George E. ZAMALEK
Quoins Cottage, Shaftesbury Road, Mere, Wilts BA12 6BW
1141. BUCCA Patsy V. S.S.HENRY WYNKOOP
85 Read Street, Winthrop, Mass. 02152, U.S.A.
1142. DODDS John H. FURY
12 Clarence Grove Road, Weston Super Mare, Avon BS23 4AQ
1143. MILLAR I.W. OBEDIENT
73 Knight Street, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 1AX
1144. PLUMMER Derek SUFFOLK/ASHANTI/ESCAPADE
Brook Cottage, Canworthy Water, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 8UD
1145. RINDER Reginald L. U.S.MERCHANT MARINE
20 Pine Arbor Lane, Unit 207, Vero Beach, Florida 32962, U.S.A.
1146. FULFORD F.D. ANSON/KENT
67 Northleigh Grove, Market Harborough, Leics. LE16 9QU
1147. HINTON J.R.B. SCOURGE
7 Miz Maze, Leigh, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 6JJ
1148. CHARTERS Alfred E. QUEEN
44 Willowmead Square, Marlow, Bucks SL7 1HP
1149. STARKE Leonard DUKE OF YORK
61 Leeds Road, Rawdon, Leeds LS19 6NT
1150. M^CAUSLAND Wm. M. ANGUILLA
38 Lingrey Court, Trumpington, Cambridge CB2 2JA.

WELCOME ABOARD (Continued)

1151. DINES Jeffrey G. BATTLER/ARCHER/ACTIVITY
24 Station Road, Brightlingsea, Essex CO7 0BT
1152. PICKERING Derek W. S.S.EMPIRE ARCHER
12 Muncaster Way, Whitby, Yorkshire YO22 4JW
1153. HOLLIDAY Arthur W.G. BRAMBLE
5 Ermine Close, Baydon, Marlborough, Wilts SN8 2JW.
1154. STENTON John E. ONSLOW/OFFA
29 Churston Rise, Seaton, Devon EX12 2JE.
1155. EVANS Arthur E. KEPPEL/TOWEY
28 Denis Wilson Court, Porson Road, Trumpington, Cambridge CB2 2ES
1156. PERRY Alfred C. CAIRO
63 Wablingen Way, Devizes, Wilts SN10 2BW.
1157. HORNER William ONSLAUGHT
3 Blenheim Place, Cleethorpes, S.Humberside DN35 9BG
1158. SPARKS Martin H. KENYA
76 Belle Vue Road, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3YD.
1159. STEIN John G. S.S. JOHN SHARP WILLIAMS
P.O.Box 1329, Gold Beach, Oregon, 97444, U.S.A.
1160. LEE William OFFA
62 Lingard Street, Reddish, Stockport, Cheshire SK5 6TR
1161. WALKER Charles E. ORWELL
15a Station Road, Hayes, Middx. UB3 4BD.
1162. JARVIS Alfred W. CAMPANIA
64 Birley Street, Battersea, London SW11 5XF.
1163. IRVIN Maurice W. EMPIRE ELGAR
40 Lowerfield, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 3JT
1164. RICHARDS Horace TRINIDAD
Avonside, Stimmings Meadows, Ringwood, Hants BH24 1EB.
1165. THOMAS Henry A. STRIKER/CHILTERN
36 Thalassa Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 2LA.
- 1166.. THORNE Graham K. SERAPIS
4 Meadow Lane, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 9JA.
1167. CROSS E.P. WESTCOTT
16 Gertrude Road, Belvedere, Kent DA17 5AT.
1168. BROWN John J. ARMY BASE TROMSO
71 Rosslyn Drive, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside L46 OSX
1169. HALL John W. HARDY
186 Preston New Road, Southport, Merseyside PR9 8NY.
1170. REED Barth F. SS GEORGE E BADGER
13027 Calais Street, New Orleans, L.A. 70129-1301 U.S.A.
1171. KINDERSLEY Richard K. NAVAL PARTY 100
57 Chalfont Road, Oxford OX2 6JJ.
1172. MORTIMORE Richard G. SOMALI
Outwoods, Rectory Lane, Bramshott, Liphook, Hants QU30 7QZ
1173. KAYE Joseph S. S.S. HARPALYCUS
Cartrefle, Llangwnadl, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 5NY
1174. CAIRNS Alexander S.S.RAPANGA
93 Clifton Gardens, St Annes on Sea, Lytham St Annes, Lancs FY8 3PJ.

WELCOME ABOARD continued.

1175. GAUNT Kenneth M. SS PAULUS POTTER/EL COSTON
292 Onslow Road, Shenton Park, Perth, Western Australia 6008.
1176. CURLEY George H. KENT
156 Poverest Road, Orangton, Kent.
1177. LUND Raymond SCORPION
17 Haddricksmill Road, South Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1QL
1178. STYLE William BOOTLE/RODNEY
7 Stafford Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5PQ
1179. COX William Henry ROWLEY
1 Glendale Close, Yelfrey Road, Whitland, Dyfed SA34 OQC
1180. BRIERCLIFFE T.A. MALCOLM
5 Woodside Close, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 OUE
1181. WARD Donald B. NP100/MARTIN/JAMAICA
200 Guisborough Road, Nunthorpe, Middlesborough, Cleveland TS7 OJG
1182. SHIRREFS Roderick J. NAIRANA
2 Dalatho Crescent, Peebles, Peebleshire EH45 8DT
1183. BALL Raymond H. TRINIDAD/BERMUDA
9 Woodall Close, Pudsey, W.Yorks LS28 7TX
1184. SUTTON William J. ORIBI
30 Chessington Hill Park, Chessington, Surrey KT9 2BS
1185. NORMAN Harold H. SUFFOLK
6 Furnace Terrace, Penrhintyn, Neath, W.Glamorgan SA11 2EE
1186. ROGERS Stanley
126 Strines Road, Marple, Cheshire SK6 7DU
1187. SMITH Alan BOLTON CASTLE/FORT ISLAND
35 Greenacre Road, Hingham, Norwich NR9 4HG
1188. NEVE Eric H. BALDUR III
30 St Peters Road, Ditton, Aylesford, Kent ME20 6PJ
1189. SUTHERLAND James EMPIRE ELGAR
Geniefea, 39a North End Road, Stromness, Orkney KW16 3LH.
1190. SAYER Leslie D. AVENGER
The Observatory, Rowney's Farm, Wakes Colne, Colchester, CO6 2AS
1191. JERVIS Percy N. GLASGOW
Holly Cottage, Brereton, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 9SN
1192. COBB Ralph A. NAVAL PART 200
140 Lower Road, Countess Wear, Exeter EX2 7BD

Up to and including 31st. January 1991

CHANGES OF ADDRESS ETC

568. ALLEN Peter to 17 Kennaway Road, Ottery St Mary, Devon EX11 1TE
263. BEARD E.E. to 57 Wentworth Close, Weybourne, Farnham, Surrey GU9 9HJ
1027. CHARLES G.V. to 41 Whitehouse Cres., Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6ER
221. GOLDSMITH A. to 7 Jubilee Way, Steeple Morden, Royston, Herts SG8 ONF
649. GROUTAGE S. to c/o 256 Wombridge Rd, Trench, Telford, Shrops. TF2 6PS
974. HART C.W. to 66 Cannon Street, Lincoln, Lincs. LN2 5EE
920. HIGH D.G. to 93 Tedworth Rd, Bilton Grange, Hull HU9 4AU
645. JOHNSTON Peter to 28 Fullers Way North, Tolworth, Surrey KT6 7LH
50. KING George to 16 Sherwood Drive, Model Village, Mansfield, Notts.
266. TIFFIN S. should read Fairfield South (not Close).
907. MIDDLETON C. should read Ulcombe (not Wicombe)
655. HOWES A.R. should read F.A.A. (not R.A.F.)
504. PICKLES E. to 61 Merlin Court, Knowle Park, Keighley, Yorks BD21 1SP
98. CONLEY Sid. ships should read NAIRANA/NIGERIA