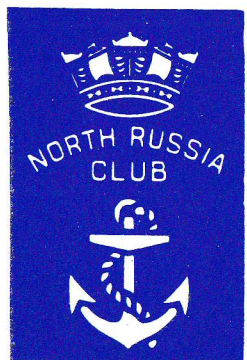


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9/90



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH RUSSIA CLUB

9/90

NORTHERN LIGHT N° 21.

Your Officers and Committee 1990-1991

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Vice Presidents: Captain F.A. Collins RN.
Captain S. Farquharson-Roberts OBE.,RN.(Rtd).
Chairman: Norman Batchelor.
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HOW THE ART ARTIFICER SEES

HIS FELLOW COMMITTEE MEMBERS!!!



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A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Chris. B. Tye,
5 Begonia Avenue,
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Dear Member,

Since 24th November, 1984 when I founded the North Russia Club aboard H.M.S. Belfast, with the first 35 members from those who served ashore in Murmansk, Polyarnoe and Archangel, following my quest for one man, my 'oppo' there. 1089 ex Russian Convoy veterans have registered as members throughout the country and overseas. These have included men from all of the services that participated.

As men came from 'out of the woodwork' and rocketed from 200, then 300 and 400, my grateful thanks went to Dick Squires for his offer of help, which eventually saved the threat of closure of membership at 700. Thus avoiding the reluctant denial to the continued list of interested applicants. Then, my thanks were given to Eric Rathbone for assistance as Treasurer and Membership Secretary, then following the increase in work involved with club finances, the work with club membership being undertaken by Les Sullivan, our present Membership Secretary. Then again our Art Artificer, the other Les - Lawrence, and the other officers and committee.

Having said many times at Reunion functions, whilst being rightly proud of the achievement of bringing men together 45-49 years after the conflict, with added pleasure of many from the same ship's crews. It would not have been possible without the interest and support of the members.

At no time was any reward sought or expected because it has been the most gratifying, rewarding and exciting experience to the point where I would say "Chris. B. Tye, - This Is Your Life".

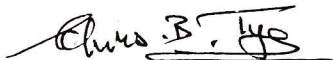
In consequence and conclusion, if ever felt necessary, there surely could be no greater reward - or award, than the honour and pride of being invited to become President of our unique "North Russia Club". Having planted the little acorn in 1984, a massive, elegant oak tree stands before us in full foliage. May it be there in all it's glory for many, many more years to come.

So always remember, "Tomorrow is the first day of the rest of your life".

With kindest regards and best wishes to all members, wives and families.

Yours very sincerely,

A Very Proud,



Chris. B. Tye.

President, North Russia Club.



CLUB NEWS

A. G. M. Following a very constructive and lively Annual General Meeting we are sure that we will be able to offer our membership many more benefits during the ensuing year. You will have seen the new list of officials on Page 1 and will probably have noticed a 'New Look' in some quarters, hopefully this will mean new ideas, new functions, new services for all. A special Welfare Fund has been set up to help our members who are in need of a helping hand. If you know of, or hear of a member in this situation, please, please contact Ron Phelps.

COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL. Most of you will have heard that the Soviet authorities have now agreed to make more medals available for those who missed out on the first allocation, or did not apply for the award. The Medals Department at M.O.D. (H.M.S. Centurion) has accepted our submitted membership list and this also includes the new members listed on pages 16 to 18 in this edition. Do not worry if you have already made separate application or are a member of another organisation who has applied - we are informed that "it will all be sorted out" by the department.

The above list should not be confused with a possible further Soviet 'medallion' award to mark the 50th Anniversary of the first convoy to Russia in 1941. A list, including all N.R.C. members is being drawn up on a worldwide basis and this will be submitted to the appropriate authority who will consider if it is a viable venture. The Soviets are very keen to make a gesture of this nature during 1991. You will be kept informed of developments.

TOURS TO U.S.S.R. IN 1991. You may have read the advance notice in the Sunday Express and in Navy News. We can confirm that two tours are being arranged and if you are interested you should ensure that I have your name on the mailing list. Tour "A" will be from 4th to 11th May and, if the numbers are viable, we will fly direct to Murmansk from a U.K. airport - we will be there during the 46th Anniversary of Victory Celebrations. Tour "B" will be from 5th to 12th October - these dates have been suggested by Murmansk authorities as they will be celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the city's Foundation as well as the 50th anniversary year of the start of the convoys. This tour could also include a visit to Archangel.

1990 TOUR. The report of this year's tour is unavoidably deferred to a later issue due to lack of space. We have already exceeded our budgeted number of pages (Dont count, Mr.Treasurer!)

WESTMINSTER ABBEY. We are again sharing a plot in the Field of Remembrance with the Russian Convoy Club - the plot is N° 136 "Arctic Campaign Veterans". Why not come along with other members for the service and poppy planting in the presence of H.M. Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. Thursday 8th November, arrive by 1030 a.m. by Victoria Street entrance.

THE CENOTAPH We have been invited to participate with the Russian Convoy Club in the Cenotaph Parade and March Past on Remembrance Sunday 11th November 1990. The contingents assemble at 1020 hours and disperse at Horse Guards Parade on completion of the Parade and March Past. Admission to Horse Guards Parade is by ticket only. Please phone me on 051 487 9567 at once if you require tickets.

6TH ANNUAL REUNION DINNER Tickets are going very quickly, so make haste with your reservation - to Les Jones, 35 Neargates, Charnock Richard, near Chorley, Lancs - Tel:0257 791632.

CHRISTMAS CARDS Have you bought your N.R.C. Xmas Cards yet? They are still only £3 for 10, while stocks last. Order them from the Membership Secretary - address on Page One.

BLUE NOSE CERTIFICATES We are sorry for the delay in fulfilling recent orders, this has been caused by the printer having a small problem with parchment paper - you'll get them soon.

853 ROYAL NAVAL AIR SQUADRON

An excerpt from the Squadron's History

ESCORT TO CONVOY RA61

TRACKER sailed from Scapa Flow on the 21st of October 1944 in company with VINDEX, NAIRANA and DIDO and escorted by UNDAUNTED, NUBIAN and the 21st Escort Group. On the 22nd two Avengers were launched to do Cobra 25 patrols to search for the convoy which was sighted by both crews. Two Wildcats were launched to intercept a bogey but were unable to locate due to low visibility. Subsequently it was found to have been an Avenger with faulty IFF.

The carrier force joined the convoy on the 23rd. It consisted of merchant ships and submarine chasers bound for Russia. The carriers and DIDO were stationed in the centre of the merchantmen. Close screening was by the 17th Destroyer Flotilla and the 8th and 21st Escort Groups. The 3rd and 15th Escort Groups formed an extended screen. During the passage the carriers took it in turns to be duty ship for 8 hours each. TRACKER maintained two-plane Adder patrols from 0630 on 25th, 26th and 27th. The weather was bad with winds of 35 knots and the flight deck pitching 20 to 40 feet when the ship was into wind. TRACKER homed a lost Swordfish from VINDEX and it finally landed making good ground speed of only 30 knots. VINDEX scrambled two Wildcats to intercept a bogey which proved to be a Russian Catalina.

On the 27th October D/F bearings indicated that five U-boats were in the vicinity and an additional three aircraft were launched on a close search. At 1118 'TF', crewed by Sub-Lieuts Brewer and Briscoe and PO Hadfield, sighted a 510 ton U-boat on the surface. Following standard procedures they orbited the U-boat and signalled its position, course and speed to the convoy. The 3rd Escort Group was ordered to the position and TRACKER turned into the wind to launch its strike force of two Avengers and two Wildcats, which were manned and at instant readiness on deck. However, after 'TF' had completed one orbit of the U-boat it crash dived. Sub-Lieut Brewer immediately dived on the U-boat and dropped an 'Oscar' ahead of the swirl. This was an acoustic homing depth charge and the conditions were ideal for its use, but no explosion followed. When the U-boat submerged the launch of the strike force was cancelled. 'TF' dropped markers at the position and waited for the escort which arrived about half an hour later. When 'TF' landed on, it was found that wiring to the arming device was short circuited and when the arming switch was thrown a fuse blew and the 'Oscar' had been dropped unarmed.

On the 28th October 1944, TRACKER arrived at the Kola Inlet, and anchored in Vaenga Bay. The ship remained at Vaenga for four days. The time was spent on maintenance work on the aircraft. The squadron soccer team played and defeated the ship's Wardroom 6 - 0. The Red Navy Choir gave a concert to an audience from TRACKER and the escort ships in the ship's hangar.

The ship sailed from the Kola Inlet on the 2nd November to escort a home-ward bound convoy. U-boats were said to be waiting outside for the convoy and the surface escort dropped many depth charges to deter them. The squadron maintained three aircraft on patrol on the 3rd, flying 14 sorties during the day. Four aircraft landed on in the dark. The aircraft flown by Lieuts Jones and Treloar sighted a diving U-boat but were not near enough to attack. They marked the position until the 15th Escort Group arrived to continue the hunt. On the 4th, seven further sorties were flown on Cobra 20 patrols and on sector searches. 'TF' (JZ397) put a wheel in a catwalk on landing. Its mainplane was severely damaged when the flight deck party hauled it back on deck, rendering it unserviceable for the remainder of the voyage. The last two aircraft landed on in total darkness. On the 5th the wind fell to 3 - 5 knots, insufficient to operate Avengers with a full load of depth charges, and TRACKER's turn as duty carrier was taken over by NAIRANA. TRACKER resumed as duty carrier on the 6th, four aircraft flying Cobra patrols and sector searches to a depth of 60 miles. One Wildcat was launched to investigate a bogey but was immediately recalled because the bogey was an Avenger with faulty IFF. On the 7th patrols were flown by

seven Avengers. One had to return to be replaced by a reserve because of a fuel leak. Two aircraft burst tyres when landing-on. On the 8th there was again insufficient wind to operate Avengers and TRACKER's turn as duty carrier was again taken over by NAIRANA.

TRACKER arrived at Scapa Flow on the 9th and then proceeded to the Clyde. On the 11th November the squadron proceeded on leave.....the squadron then transferred to QUEEN and took part in Operations 'Cupola', 'Prefix' and 'Carefree'. Then followed Operation 'Newmarket' before Operation 'Judgement'... ..QUEEN sailed from Scapa Flow on 1st May 1945 in company with NORFOLK (CS1), DIADEM, SEARCHER and TRUMPETER and escorted by OPPORTUNE, SCOURGE, SAVAGE, ZAMBESI, CERESFORT, OBEDIENT and ORWELL. The force was accompanied by BLUE RANGER. While duty carrier QUEEN launched ten Wildcats and one Avenger patrol was flown. The following day the squadron was not called upon to fly but the air-crews were briefed for Operation Judgement.

On the 3rd QUEEN was duty carrier and flew six Crocodile 10 patrols. In the evening two Avengers and a Wildcat were launched to investigate a contact report by an escorting destroyer but nothing was found.

On the 4th May, eight Avengers, armed with four 500lb bombs each, were boosted for a strike on Kilbotn U-boat harbour in the Lofoten Islands. They were accompanied as close escort by four of the squadron Wildcats. A ninth Avenger went unserviceable due to an air lock in the fuel supply and had to be left behind. The strike force of forty-four aircraft also included Avengers 846 Squadron from TRUMPETER and Wildcats of 882 Squadron from SEARCHER. The strike flew at low level until making a landfall at Skoger. It then climbed to 4,000 feet at which altitude the targets in Kilbotn Harbour were clearly visible. 846 Squadron had been assigned the U-boat depot ship BLACK WATCH as its target and 853 the torpedo depot ship METEOR. Wildcats from 882 Squadron were to bomb and straffe the ex-Norwegian cruiser HAARFLAGER which was tied up at a pier some way from the other ships. The weather was very good with a little cloud to give some cover to the approaching aircraft. They encountered moderate heavy and light flak. As the close escort fighters strafed the targets the Avengers peeled off in rapid succession to bomb them. The first 853 Squadron aircraft to dive was 'QA', flown by Lieut. Sailes with the CO as observer. It received a direct hit in the port mainplane, probably by a 40mm shell, and was badly damaged. The Telegraphist/Air Gunner, CPO Astbury, was wounded by shrapnel but the aircraft remained serviceable. The targets were rapidly obscured by smoke and spray making it difficult to observe hits. 'QF', flown by Sub Lieut. Gall, suffered an electrical failure and its bombs had to be dropped with the emergency release, resulting in an overshoot. The last 853 Avenger, piloted by Sub Lieut Buchanan, finding the 853 target completely hidden, saw the BLACK WATCH emerging from the smoke and spray and transferred his aim to this, scoring a direct hit which was followed shortly by a violent explosion. All 853 Squadron aircraft returned to the ship and landed on safely. One 846 Avenger and one Wildcat failed to return and were presumed to have been shot down by anti aircraft fire. Photographs by the last aircraft to leave the scene showed primary targets on fire with the BLACK WATCH down by the stern. Reconnaissance later showed both had sunk. It was also learned that a U-boat, U771, had been moored between the two depot ships and had also been sunk.....

.....next followed Operations 'Clever' and 'Timeless'.

ACHIEVEMENTS: In its brief life of 18 months the squadron:-

Flew 5,065 hours.

Operated from three carriers.

Escorted 2 convoys to Russia and back.

Took part in 5 operations against the enemy in Norway.

Flew 297 operational sorties.

Made 1,197 deck landings, 94 at night. The deck landings were made at a cost of 7 significant accidents, an accident rate of less than 1%.

Only 2 accidents occurred taking off from carriers.

H. J. C. SPENCER

H.M.S. VINDEX

825 SWORDFISH SQUADRON

OPERATION GREYSTOKE 1944 - CONVOYS JW63 AND RA63

825 Squadron was at Limavady in Northern Ireland operating under Coastal Command against U-boats close to the western coasts of Britain and Ireland. 825 had only left VINDEX in November and all hands were preparing to go home on Christmas leave when the CO Freddie Sheffield said "sorry chaps we are going back to VINDEX", the squadron had just replaced their ageing Hurricanes for eight Wild Cats.

This run would be made in almost total darkness and 825 was a night flying squadron, on their own they would have to provide all the air power and bad weather had been forecast.

28th December: VINDEX sailed from the Clyde for Scapa Flow with her escorts.

31st December: Sailed at noon with DIADEM and six ships of the 23rd Destroyer Flotilla, to rendezvous with JW63, which had left Loch Ewe on the 30th and take it to Kola. Swordfish took off at 1420 to patrol ahead as U-boats had been reported.

1st January: Convoy sighted and VINDEX took up her station in the box at the tail of the convoy. There were 36 merchantmen including four ammunition ships, four tankers and two escort oilers, some of which were old friends, the escorts consisted of the sloops CYGNET, LARK and LAPWING all old hands on the Ruski Run, with them the destroyers WESTCOTT, WALKER and the corvettes ALNWICK CASTLE, ALLINGTON CASTLE and BAMBURGH CASTLE.

2nd January: VINDEX crossed the Arctic Circle and all the new boys were presented with their Order of the Blue Nose.

3rd January: Unidentified aircraft were picked up about 19 miles from the convoy and another Bogey got within six miles of the ships, two Wild Cats were flown off but found nothing and returned to VINDEX, as they flew over the destroyer SCORPION it opened up with its armament but luckily missed.

5th January: The convoy entered the U-boat area and Swordfish aircraft patrolled ahead and astern, one of these aircraft crashed on landing, flying then continued until the 7th when the weather closed in and stopped all further flying.

7th January: Russian escorts came out to meet the convoy and VINDEX with four of the Fleet destroyers steamed ahead and entered the Kola Inlet, anchoring at N°.48 berth. It was the first time that a convoy had reached Russia without a single brush with the enemy.

11th January: VINDEX with her escorts sailed including the destroyers ZAMBESI, ZEBRA, WALKER and WESTCOTT to escort RA63 home. U-boat reports came in before the ships were properly formed up, escorts made depth charge attacks and in the darkness the convoy made a 90° turn led by the Commodore in S.S. BRITISH RESPECT. VINDEX's aircraft were already aloft on patrol and at 1300 the last aircraft landing hit the barrier and it took until 1800 to repair. By this time the weather had closed in and all aircraft were recalled. The cold front stretched from North Cape across to Spitzbergen right in front of the convoy, more depth charge attacks were made on U-boat contacts and visibility was down to 300 yards. With heavy south-westerly gales reported and rising seas everything was lashed down, by now the ship was

rolling badly and the lashed aircraft slipped and lifted a wheel as the ship rolled to port or starboard. The gale with all its fury struck out of the south west, and the rolling, pitching lines of ships ploughed on.

12th January: Speed was reduced to allow stragglers to catch up.

13th January: No flying but three Wild Cats were kept on the flightdeck in readiness.

14th January: Hit by another fierce gale and with thickening snow the convoy turned beam on to the worsening seas, VINDEX recorded a 33° roll with damage to ships fittings and minor injuries to some crew members. The American S.S. AMASA DELANO took a 20° list when her ballast shifted and at one time was in danger of sinking, the convoy altered course to help her, but this put them near North Cape and the torpedo bombers. She eventually corrected her list and regained her station.

15th January: The gale moderated a little and U-boats contacts were made about 30 miles away, two Swordfish were flown off but returned in two hours in worsening weather having found nothing, later in the forenoon a warning from Iceland forecast a hurricane, again everything was lashed down and the ships steamed on hoping for the best. The American S.S. JOHN GIBBON dropped out of line with condenser trouble and one escort stood by her. The British tanker LONGWOOD was also in trouble, all the generators were out of action and one of her furnaces had collapsed, she could only steer with great difficulty. During the Last Dog Watch the hurricane struck the convoy and speed was reduced to seven knots. By 2100 VINDEX was hove to and rolled 38° with the wind recorded at 80 knots. Waves broke over the catwalks and several stranded fish were seen there, ton on ton of water fell on her flight deck, water flooded through her fresh air systems into the messdecks etc. The wardroom piano broke loose and smashed across the deck and tables sheared off. In the messdecks there was chaos, stools hurtled across the decks with men desperately trying to dive into their hammocks - the only safe place. Water, broken crockery and bits of clothing sloshed around and above the messdeck, toolboxes and gear slammed across the hangar.

17th January: The convoy was scattered all over the Norwegian Sea. It was at this time that it was discovered that a rum cask in the spirit room had broken loose and had smashed into others and broached them, the spirit room deck was awash with a mixture of rum, whisky and gin and the smell was sweeping through the entire ship. There was a long line of volunteers to clear up the spirit room armed with anything that would hold liquid, this cocktail that swilled around was condemned as it had dissolved the red lead on the deck. It was pumped out over the side and it was later said that any stragglers astern could find VINDEX by the smell. As the liquid was pumped over the side fannies and buckets were dangled from the catwalks above, in the hopes of catching some of it. The convoy remained scattered and VINDEX pressed on at 10 knots and overtook the main group about 30 miles from Thorshavn. DIADEM had remained astern of the Commodore and high seas had smashed her boats and torn out hawse-pipes.

All ships arrived at Thorshavn and on 20th January left for Scapa Flow. VINDEX was only in Scapa a few hours and from there flew 825 Squadron off to Machrihanish, and the ship docked at Greenock for a two month refit.

DUE TO AN EXTENDED 'SHELF LIFE' IN THE READY USE LOCKER
THE NAME OF THE CONTRIBUTOR HAS BECOME DETACHED. TO
WHOEVER IT IS, I OFFER MY APOLOGIES AND AM READY FOR A
SESSION OF JANKERS. EDITOR

"I came across an old newspaper cutting recently. It was written by Arthur Oakshott who was sharing the Flag Deck of H.M.S. SCYLLA with us Bunting Tossers during the actions of PQ 18. I was a young 18 year old Signaller then and it sure brought it all back to me when I re-read this article after 48 years!!

P.S. The action took place from Sunday 13th September 1942.

Joe E. Robinson. (Bognor Regis)

THE NAVY WON A GREAT VICTORY

LUFTWAFFE'S BIG LOSSES IN FOUR-DAY BATTLE

"News of the World" Special

THE largest convoy ever sent to Russia got through with vital supplies for our Allies. That is the salient fact which emerges from the days of danger through which we lived while the convoy forged ahead despite the worst attack of the war by aircraft and U-boats."

That is the final summing-up on the great four-day Arctic convoy battle by Arthur Oakshott, Reuter's special correspondent, who saw the Navy and the Fleet Air Arm write a brilliant new page of naval history from the bridge of the convoy flagship, H.M. cruiser Scylla.

The convoy got through, and in getting it through the Navy fought and won the most sustained and heaviest sea-air battle of the war.

To-day the Luftwaffe and the U-boats are once again licking their wounds after probably the biggest defeat they have so far received.

At a conservative estimate 40 German torpedo-bombers, dive-bombers and high-level bombers were definitely destroyed, and an equal number almost certainly destroyed. Two U-boats were sent to the bottom and four others seriously damaged.

Some of the German aircraft probably took part in the attacks on successive days, and it is therefore likely that their air losses amounted to between a third and a half of the total planes employed.

Our losses were only four fighters, and the pilots of three were saved. Some of the merchant ships in the convoy were sunk, but a great many of the crews were rescued.

On the return journey the convoy's escort was attacked continuously by U-boats, but no aircraft attempted to intervene. The Tribal class destroyer Somall and the minesweeper Leda were sunk.

YEOMAN WHITE

HIS LANGUAGE BEAT ANY SERGEANT-MAJOR'S

The gallantry and rugged determination, and, above all, the un-failing humour of the British sailor have rarely been more vividly portrayed than in Reuter's story of the battle.

Yeoman of Signals White, of the cruiser Scylla, is a typical sailor. When the first wave of German torpedo-bombers was sighted this yeoman of signals, binoculars to eyes, counted them aloud:

"One, two, three . . . ten, fifteen . . . forty-two coming in, sir. Where's me — t'what? I can never find it when I wants it."

So the battle starts. As the planes zoom over the destroyer screen, hell breaks loose. Nothing else can describe it.

The port guns of the destroyers open up, followed immediately by every gun in the convoy from the smallest merchant ship to the "big stuff" aboard the Scylla— heavy pom-poms, Oerlikons, anti-aircraft guns of every description, machine-guns, even Bren guns.

A WHIRLING MAELSTROM

The battle becomes a whirling maelstrom of shells, bullets, tracers, black, blue, brown, and grey smoke-bursts. The zoom of aircraft, the crashing of bursting shells add to the din.

The excitement on the flag deck becomes deafening, only to be stilled by the stentorian voice of that yeoman of signals: "Shut yer ruddy jaw. Can't you see that destroyer's lamp calling up? Go on, get on to it."

Nothing perturbs Yeoman White, who controls everybody in that small space with a vocabulary such as beats any sergeant-major. I ever heard during my Army days. But it is the thing to fend off any possible attack of the jitters.

And when it is all over—the convoy safely in and the escort back in home waters—a crisp voice comes from the bridge loud-speaker: "Those planes above are friendly Hurricanes."

Yeoman of Signals White? "Cor' stone the bleedin' crows— all 'Urricanes is friendly, Blimey! 'Ere comes a good-natured 'Einkel."

One vivid impression remains in my memory (says Reuter's correspondent), that of the padre, the Rev. P. B. Clear, listening without batting an eyelid to Yeoman of Signal White's vocabulary, and paying no more attention to the explosions of bombs, shells, and guns than he would if the noise had been caused by a parishioner dropping a hymn book in his church.

RECKLESS GALLANTRY

ADMIRAL'S TRIBUTE TO FIGHTER PILOTS

Tribute to the "reckless gallantry" of the Fleet Air Arm's fighter pilots was paid in an Admiralty communique.

Rear-Admiral R. L. Burnett, who commanded the escorting forces, added his praise when he said to Reuter's correspondent:

"Don't forget the aircraft carrier. Those lads were magnificent. Never have I seen such courage and daring. Magnificent youngsters."

In paying this tribute, Rear-Admiral Burnett was omitting



Lt.-Com. J. A. H. R. McKean.

the part he played in the operation—the largest and most tricky of its kind in the war. The amazingly small percentage of losses in merchant ships is in itself a tribute to his brilliant strategy and direction. And the Scylla owes the success and brilliance of her maiden "party" to the remarkable seamanship of her skipper, Capt. Macintyre. Another hero of the battle was Lieut.-Comdr. J. A. H. R. McKean, who, microphone in hand, wandered from side to side of the bridge, keeping up a running commentary for the benefit of the ship's company.

THE DIARY OF SIGNALMAN SHACKLETON CONTINUED

ABOARD H.M.S. SALAMANDER

Saturday July 4th continued: The smaller escorts HALCYON, BRITOMART and ourselves (Fleet Sweepers) LORD MIDDLETON, LORD AUSTIN, NORTHERN GEM and AYRSHIRE (Trawlers), LOTUS and LA MALOUINE (Corvettes) PALOMARES and POZARICA (A.A. Ships), were ordered to North Russian ports as quickly as possible, spreading and proceeding independently. All were worn out and tried to get some rest.

Sunday July 5th We were bombed early in the morning. At 1500 hours the ALDERSDALE, lying 5 miles astern of us was badly hit and the crew took to the boats. We turned, and in standing by to pick them up we were again narrowly missed by a Junkers 88 who sprayed the decks with his guns before dropping his load just off the beam. We had the satisfaction of pumping four drums of point-five armour piercing rounds after him. He sheered off and we picked up fifty-six survivors from ALDERSDALE. An hour later, with her still afloat, SALAMANDER went alongside and a boarding party was sent aboard, I along with them to salvage charts and confidential books. I had dumped my share of the books and was giving a hand with other things on the flying bridge, when SALAMANDER stood off and began signalling frantically to "man the guns" (ALDERSDALE had quite a few Oerlikons for close defence). I tried to report this order but found that the ship had again been abandoned - there was no one on the bridge or chart house or on the upper deck, there was no response from any of the voicepipes leading below - then I noticed that the falls of the last remaining lifeboat were down and the boat had disappeared from the davits. The captain was peering downwards and was about to leave down the falls! I hollered out my message but was ordered immediately into the lifeboat. (They had forgotten that I was aboard). I beat the 9.4 record down two bridges and along the fly-deck to the stern to ask "why the panic?", to be told that high octane was leaking into a hold where fire was suspected, and it could happen that she could go up at any time, so into the lifeboat I slid, without standing on ceremony, my conscience not being made any easier because of the fact that our friend Jerry was loafing in the background again, watching and waiting. (I tried to give the position to SALAMANDER, but the irregular movement of the lifeboat - there was a short, choppy sea running - meant that I couldn't stand upright to use my handflags). For fifteen minutes we pulled for hours (??? Ed.) until we were once more in comparative safety of SALAMANDER. Jerry made no attempt to complete his effort, so we endeavoured to sink her by gunfire (we even lobbed a couple of depth charges at her but they shook up SALAMANDER far more than the tanker. We were halted in our task by a W/T report that said a German destroyer was on our tail, belting along at approximately 22 knots, so we stood not upon the order of our going, but went, coaxing - after much persuasion - 17 knots from the engine - SALAMANDER was designed to give a maximum 15 knots. Mathematical calculation of a weird race began, with an unsettled future as prize or a billet in Stalag as runner-up. We could keep out of sight, by virtue of distance alone for twelve hours at the most, and it was going to take us all that time to close the land. This was at 1745.

Monday July 6th At 0100 we were engaged by a sister ship, HALCYON, who seeing our masts creeping over the horizon, had fired on us in the belief that we were the destroyer that was causing a flutter in the dovecot. (Our rate of closing was much faster than SALAMANDER's maximum speed). Accordingly I had to climb the mast with a portable aldis to establish our identity. How I regretted that I was the senior signalman on watch! We caught up with them eventually to learn that they had spliced the mainbrace in anticipation of an action, no such luck for us though. We whipped up all possible speed and losing all aircraft in the bad visibility steered a course for Matochkin Strait on Novaya Zemlya. We were six strong, PALOMARES, three minesweepers, a rescue ship and one merchantman. Land was sighted at 0900 and we anchored in the creek at 1221. At 1605 an alarm

was raised when ships were sighted, but they turned out to be POZARICA, POPPY and LAMOUINE with EL CAPITAN and BENJAMIN HARRISON. Mutual congratulations being over our skippers adjourned for a conference, broken up at 2000 by further reports of a war vessel being sighted. It was the LOTUS bringing in three trawlers and the SAMUEL CHASE - four more recruits for what was the largest section of the convoy still afloat. Our W/T has logged sixteen S.O.S.'s up to now. The strait was frozen about sixteen miles or so inland, so the guardians of the convict settlement ashore assured us that there was no chance of making a dash into the Kara Sea and creeping down the eastern coast of Cape Kanin. It was decided that we would remain there for twenty-four hours, then try our luck down the western coast. In the evening of the 7th (?? Ed.) we set out, quite an imposing convoy of three sweepers (SALAMANDER, HALCYON and BRITOMART), three corvettes POPPY, LA MALOUINE and LOTUS), two A.A. ships, (PALOMARES and POZARICA), one rescue ship (ZAMALEK) and five merchantmen (OCEAN FREEDOM, HOOZIER, EL CAPITAN, BENJAMIN HARRISON and ?)

(Omitted from the notes but remembered clearly) - the to-ing and fro-ing whilst we were in shelter. At the time that the order to scatter was given, one of the County Class cruisers had flown off her little seaplane on reconnaissance. So quickly had they departed that when the pilot returned they were already beyond his flying endurance. He alighted and was taken in tow by one of the A.A. ships, converted banana boats. While in Matochkin Shah we had time to draw breath and share out water, oil, fuel, petrol, coal and other supplies. The three trawlers looked freaks. They had taken their charges to the northern ice-edge, made fast, then painted the seaward side of each ship with what white paint was available. They looked like black and white minstrels as they manoeuvred, presenting first Dr. Jekyll then Mr. Hyde. The little seaplane - the name escapes me but it was the type with the propellor aft - a pusher plane, (Walrus) was fuelled with what high octane petrol was available and flown off for a reconnaissance. It was on the strength of his report that we decided to make a break for it. The people ashore were convicts, they had few guards, no wireless, and looked as if they had been "dumped" and left to fend for themselves. We ran into bad visibility and thanked our lucky stars. The leading ships streamed a long line, about a cable long, with a scoop that threw up a little plume of wake, and the following ship played follow my leader, keeping station and distance from the ship in front. We had no radar at this stage of the war, but the Asdic fitted to the sweepers and corvettes enabled them to keep station on the beam, getting a bearing and distance from their "pings". Thus we continued until the afternoon of the 7th (?? Ed.) when we ran into heavy pack ice. (I had had the forenoon watch, had my tot and had turned into my hammock to get some rest. I was awakened by the ship's siren making the morse letters for I C E. The whole messdeck was awake and I was trying to work out mentally what code was being used. It hit me that it was P L - plain language - just as SALAMANDER ran into the pack ice with the noise of a thousand crashes from all around us, and the engines being raced full astern. Everyone was on deck, there was thick fog and small bergs with a lot of pancake ice all around us. We were sheering away from the convoy to avoid being punched up the exhaust by the following ships - merchant ships needed a lot more sea-room than us to slow and stop). In trying to manoeuvre through this, we were separated from the rest of the convoy, and when the visibility improved at midnight we appeared to be the sole survivor. (A seaman was sent to the crow's nest to try and con the ship through any gaps in the icefield). We smashed our way through it, and at 0800 were clear. In one hour alone, six U-boats had been reported - by W/T - as being in the vicinity, so we ploughed a solitary figure through the hoggin for Cape Kanin at the east tip of the White Sea. At 1530 we passed the DIANELLA who had got rid of her survivors and refuelled - and was returning to look for more survivors. We exchanged information regarding the displacement of our units in the White Sea, later substantiated by W/T report, that BRAMBLE, HAZARD, LEDA and SEAGULL - MS 1 and

MS 6, our fellow flotillas, who acted with us as local escorts based on Archangel or Murmansk according to season, were placed in strategic positions to ensure anti-submarine protection and assistance. So far, so good, and we sighted land during the evening.

The following morning we passed HAZARD and LEDA on patrol. They instructed us to report to BRAMBLE. We had the interesting experience of "seeing" BRAMBLE whilst she was over 100 miles away - upside down in a mirage, - our skipper reasoned that since we could see her, then she should be able to see us, and I was ordered to the searchlight to make a report, without success -. A couple of hours after leaving HAZARD we received our first indication of the rest of the convoy in the form of a "help" message. They were being dive-bombed 175 miles to the northward. Again we tried to contact BRAMBLE directing our searchlight on a bank of cloud between the two of us and flashing the letters O A - O A - immediate, enemy aircraft - BRAMBLE saw this, but had also received the Mayday signal and had commenced hauling sweep wires to go to the assistance. Our fuel supplies being below the security level, we could not return to give them any assistance, and so we were helpless while message after message was received begging for fighter protection. This was sent from Archangel, five hours after the first attack. Subsequently we learned that it was inadequate and quite useless. We passed MS 1 in BRAMBLE at 0500 on Saturday morning giving him our story by V/S - visual signalling - and he immediately turned, with SEAGULL in company, to render what assistance was possible. We then proceeded up the remainder of the White Sea and into the River Dvina tying up alongside the island on Saturday 11th July, fourteen days after leaving Hvalfjord. At 1200 we landed ALDERSDALE's survivors at Archangel returning to the Woodpile in the evening. (Many days previously I was the subject of an enquiry in SALAMANDER. When I boarded the ALDERSDALE there was a super sheepskin coat on the upper bridge. I donned this and was still wearing it when I went down into the life-boat. When I attempted to semaphore from the boat to SALAMANDER I took it off and laid it down on one of the thwarts. When we came alongside SALAMANDER I threw it on to the deck in the waist of the ship - and that was the last I saw of it. It had belonged to the Captain of ALDERSDALE, but someone in 'SALLY' - I never found out who - profited from my zeal). Archangel was open to aerial bombardment from the Germans, therefore Fleet Units were dispersed on various islands in the Dvina delta - our island had a name but was more familiarly known as the Woodpile. (Ekonomia). The following forenoon we returned to the wharves at Archangel (ramming the jetty slightly on our approach) after having a good night's sleep - incidentally, the first time that I and many others had removed any of our clothing - and a bath. I don't know who had the more "wrecked" appearance, us or the survivors. My own chin was like an unclipped hedge. I had a run ashore - for signals - to take the kinks out of my legs but I found it a great effort. It is strange, how, after a fortnight trying to balance on a heaving deck, the very land seems to continue to heave around. Is this sensation what gives sailors "rolling gait", I wonder. I spent the rest of the time ashore trying to explain billiards to a Russian soldier in the International club. In return, by signs etc., he showed me Russian snooker. A very simple game, quite easy to understand but rather more difficult to play.

Monday July 13th We took onboard 250 depth charges and a huge quantity of high explosive for transportation to Murmansk, also some R.A.F. personnel for the same place. We returned to the Woodpile to find the rest of the convoy there. They had lost another two merchantmen to divebombers and had a bad shaking up. Two further ships were damaged, one rather badly below the waterline. BRAMBLE, LEDA, HAZARD and SEAGULL were out chasing more survivors north of the White Sea.

Tuesday July 14th We bade a wistful farewell to terra firma - even though it was Russia - and in company with HALCYON and one of the rescue ships sailed for Murmansk. Early in the afternoon the rescue ship developed engine trouble and we had to return. At midnight we received instructions to search for survivors, being given a position where five boats containing fifty men had been spotted by Catalina.

Wednesday July 15th It was with drooping spirits that we turned about, and made once more for the open sea. We were carrying explosives that had earned the crew of the merchant ship five pounds monthly in danger money and heading straight for waters infested with German aircraft and submarines, not even getting five shillings a month extra. We passed DIANELLA, Archangel bound, with sixty-two survivors who gave us news of four merchant packets holed up in Novaya Zemla.

Thursday July 16th We passed the four sweepers (BRAMBLE etc.) who had been unsuccessful, and later cleared the White Sea and into the Barents Sea with the usual fog accompaniment. The whole of the day was spent in reaching our given position.

Friday July 17th We searched until evening, doing a "box" search, two sweepers in line abreast covering a given area like two combine-harvesters cutting a field of corn, when it was decided to cease the search after another twelve hours. It seemed hopeless, fog constantly hampering vision, and no aircraft to assist us. We lost all hope after covering thousands of square miles.

Saturday July 18th We set a course for Murmansk at noon. A signal was received from HALCYON to take station astern and increase speed. Forty-five minutes later HALCYON nearly collided with a raft having half a dozen men onboard. The rest was easy and soon we had found the other three rafts. The fifth, the life-boat, all hope of rescue having apparently evaporated, had left the rest and attempted to reach land. How we got through to Murmansk without being spotted had me beaten, but we did, and we landed our Yanks at Polyarnoe. They were not in too bad a shape considering they had been in open rafts.

The diary finishes here

I remember well how one of the rafts came alongside SALAMANDER. I left the signal deck and went into the waist to give some help, and as the raft bumped alongside, the first survivor passed me a huge loaf of black bread with a number and a swastika baked into the crust. They told us that the previous day a German submarine had surfaced, taken off an officer, given them bread, sausage, water and a quantity of oily rags to burn and make smoke, and conveyed to them that two "destroyers" were searching in the vicinity and they should soon be picked up. They must have had us in their periscope with empty torpedo tubes. Neither us or HALCYON had detected their presence although our asdics were in continual operation.

N.B. All items in brackets (—) are additions to the original diary.

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POET'S CORNER

REMEMBRANCE

When we are gone, will they remember us
Who fought at sea, on land and in the air -
For Freedom, from a tyranny so dread,
Will they remember us, and will they care.

To rid our world of despot's rule, and fear,
Preserving Liberty for kin and for our land,
Honour the dead who paid the greatest price,
Remember us, we pray, and understand.

May those who follow on be spared the hell of war,
Enjoy their Freedom, for 'tis dearly bought -
And in a quiet moment, pause, remember us
Who gave it you, oh yes, forget us not.

No monument alone can tell our wartime tales,
The written word, history will speak in many ways -
Our story, set in desert, oceans wide and heavens high,
Remember then our yesterdays, that paid for your today's!

Bill Johnston, ex-N.P.100/HMS Tracker

A review of Field Marshal Lord Carver's book *20th Century Warriors* in the *RUSI Journal* brought this well worded response from club member Capt. E.A.S. Bailey RN. The following is printed with permission from the Editor, Royal United Services Institute Journal.

MADAM - Military Supplies by North Russian Convoys to the Russian Front

The North Russia Club has asked me to question Lord Carver's comment (page 234) in his book *20th Century Warriors* (reviewed by you a year ago but just brought to notice) that 'Allied supplies of these equipments (tanks and aircraft) were only marginal'. This is a serious criticism by so senior an officer (unquestioned in your *Journal*) of some of the most difficult and demanding, but generally successful, operations - against colossal odds in 1942 - by the Royal Navy in the Second World War.

Supplies delivered to North Russian Ports in 1941 and 1942 were 3276 tanks, 2665 aircraft, 24,000 vehicles and 680,000 tons of other warlike stores (Churchill's 2nd World War Vol IV p. 245). Furthermore, it is understood that the railway link between Murmansk and Moscow was never cut for long and this equipment could have been delivered to the main front, less losses in transit.

Political Pressure for North Russian Convoys in 1942. Despite the debacle in July 1942 of PQ 17, Stalin vociferously and insultingly demanded the continuation of these convoys since the 2nd Front was not then possible; he would not have made so much fuss had he not valued these supplies - marginal, my hat! Due to the shortage of Carriers which rendered the customary heavy covering forces ineffective, all 16 available fleet destroyers joined PQ 18's close escort to counter the German Fleet in North Norway consisting of Tirpitz, Scheer, Hipper, Koln and 10 destroyers. Churchill visited Scapa Flow (just before PQ 18 so far as I recall to tell destroyers' crews that we had to go, despite the fate of PQ 17, to keep the USSR in the war - and off we went. Hitler, deterred from sending out his formidable fleet by our destroyer torpedo threat, laid his hopes this time (unlike PQ 17) on Goering's 265 1st line aircraft in North Norway. Ten ships were sunk by aircraft and three by U-boat, but 27 arrived. Forty -one enemy aircraft and four U-boats were destroyed.

Decisive Battle on the Russian Front. Despite massive losses of equipment in

earlier campaigns, the Russians scraped together 3306 tanks in the crucial Kursk Salient (page 155) when the Germans attacked with 1850 tanks on July 1943 in a 'battle on a titanic scale, from which the German army (which called off the attack after three weeks) never re-covered' Carver prefers to believe (page 438) that this massive Russian tank force and associated aircraft were 'provided by industries which had to be displaced hundreds of miles' further East - due to the earlier German advances - and re-erected. By December 1942 however, Britain had already landed 3276 tanks and 2665 aircraft in the North; it is inconceivable that such massive landings - as claimed by Carver bent on belittling everything naval - had only a marginal bearing on this, evidently, the decisive land battle of the war!

Maybe his Russian sources did not wish to concede to the Allies any thanks, which were so ostentatiously withheld from us at the time of delivery? Seemingly Gorbachev is continuing the Russian propoganda that Russia defeated Germany singlehanded!

* A repeated theme throughout the book, which some describe as Carver's 'sea-blindness'!

CAPTAIN E A S BAILEY

"With acknowledgments to the Editor Royal United Services Institute Journal"

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IMAGES OF WAR - THE STORY IN SOUND

WE RECOMMEND THE RUSSIAN CONVOYS, MALTA CONVOYS & WAR AT SEA TAPES. IF PURCHASED ON THE ENCLOSED PAMPHLET YOU SAVE 25p PER COPY ON IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM PRICES - ALSO, OUR ARCTIC CAMPAIGN MEMORIAL TRUST WILL RECEIVE A DISCOUNT PAYMENT, BASED ON TOTAL SALES.

HELP THE MEMORIAL TRUST FUND

FRIDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 1940 - "CITY OF BENARES"

On Friday 13th September 1940 the ship CITY OF BENARES sailed from Liverpool with members of a large convoy, she was under command of Captain Landle Nicholl (M.N.) escorted by several destroyers and corvettes - aboard the ship was nearly 100 British school children under the system of CORB (Children's Overseas Reception Board) set up by the Government, together with voluntary escorts of teachers, believed to be ten in number, one of whom was a Catholic priest Reverend Roderik O'Sullivan and an arts teacher Miss Mary Cornish - the children's ages ranged from five to fifteen years.

CITY OF BENARES was a City Line vessel, launched in 1937, chosen as Commodore of the convoy she sailed on Friday 13th September after taking on board these children in the river Mersey opposite the Pier Head.

Three days out from Liverpool and during gale force winds, the convoy was taking a "battering" especially the two corvettes at the rear - there was a merchant ship flanked on either side of CITY OF BENARES, the idea being that should she be torpedoed, that these vessels were confidently expected to salvage or save most of these young passengers.

At approximately 2150 on Tuesday 17th the ship was hit by a torpedo in the after part and passed below the children's cabins, she started to sink immediately, the officers supervised the launch of the lifeboats, most of the crew being Lascars crowded into the boats - several being capsized through overcrowding, most of the escorts were ushering the remainder of the convoy out of the attack area and could not help survivors.

Into a 30 foot lifeboat was crowded 48 people, consisting of seven white men, six children, thirty-three Lascars and one teacher - Miss Mary Cornish, the only woman. After nine days in this open boat in the storms of the Atlantic Ocean, with no rest, little food and no facilities for personal needs and especially lack of clothing and warmth - added to their fear, and the fact that none of the escort vessels picked up survivors, this one woman teacher was to become a reluctant heroine, at the age of forty.

These survivors were "snatched from the sea" by H.M.S. ANTHONY after they had spent nine days alone, almost to the point of despair. On landing at Gourock; news of their rescue had been radio-ed ahead to cause a sensation in Britain - but the feelings against the R.N. and in particular the escort vessels was very strong and none of us returned to Liverpool, the two corvettes ended up assisting the Eighth Army in the Western Desert at Solum, Bardia and Tobruk until 1944.

Finally on arrival of Mary Cornish and her six children we found that besides themselves only two other teachers and seven children had been saved, to prove that one quality emerges - it's the quality of human courage and endurance.

Eric Parry N.R.C. N° 239.

(Editor's note: If any reader was involved in the episode of Friday 13th will they please contact Eric.)

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HAVE YOU GOT A 50TH ANNIVERSARY STORY TO TELL?

IF SO, PLEASE SEND IT TO THE EDITOR, NOW.

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N O R T H R U S S I A C L U B

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT (Continued)

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FROM 1st APRIL 1989 to 31st MARCH 1990

<u>I N C O M E</u>	<u>E X P E N D I T U R E</u>
B/Fwd 1988/89 Current Account 17,888.68	Auditor's Fee 1988/1989 35.00
" " Deposit Account 12,982.54	
Balance 1989 USSR Tour 122.50	USSR Tour 1989 28,052.00
Tour Lapel Badges @ Cost 5.00	
Membership Renewals 1989/90 795.00	Wreaths (Royal British Legion) 37.50
New Members 1989/90 600.25	Renewals (Distressed members) 24.00
General Fund Donations 721.86	
<u>FUNCTIONS</u>	
Home Counties Dinner Dance 253.00	Home Counties Dinner Dance 613.45
(Note:£350.00 for above included in 1988/89 Accounts)	
Victory Services Club 29-7-89 2,340.51	Victory Services Club 29-7-89 2,194.97
Royal Tournament 1989 505.00	Royal Tournament 502.20
Victory Services Club 2-9-89 1,028.13	Victory Services Club 2-9-89 975.31
	Hire of Band HMS Belfast 3-9-89 250.00
Annual Reunion Dinner 22-10-89 3,042.22	Annual Dinner incl. Band 3,004.00
Visit Mansfield R.N.A. " " 128.00	Visit Mansfield R.N.A. 106.00
	Refund on above 10.00
Victory Services Club 2-12-89 378.00	Victory Services Club 2-12-89 263.17
Victory Services Club 24- 2-90 498.50	Victory Services Club 24-2-90 325.71
USSR Tour May 1990 45,976.45	USSR Tour 1990 Refunds 250.00
	Phone calls to Murmansk 46.60
Sales of Northern Light 9.81	Tour Expenses R.D.Squires 262.24
	Tour refund donated to A.C.M.T. 50.00
Donation to A.C.M.T.Fund 5.00	Tour Deposit to Intourist Ltd 4,500.00
	Payment to A.C.M.T.Fund 5.00
<u>SLOPS (SALES)</u>	<u>SLOPS (PURCHASES)</u>
Ties 563.36	Ties 526.05
Blazer Badges 442.37	Blazer Badges 274.42
Blue Nose Certificates 134.00	Blue Nose Certificates 108.37
Lapel Badges 227.40	Lapel Badges 112.73
Medal Holders 166.50	Medal Holders 115.00
Woollen Jumpers 644.92	Refunds Woolen Jumpers 588.84
Acrylic Jumpers 674.16	Acrylic Jumpers)..... 617.16
Sports Shirts 444.96	Sports Shirts).....
Wall Banners 133.00	Wall Banners 144.38
Wall Shields 879.80	Wall Shields 728.30
Christmas Cards 481.67	Christmas Cards 1,097.76
Windscreen Stickers 76.00	
Convoy Books 4.50	
Postage received for Slop Items 76.71	
	Membership Secretary's postal, stationery expenses including despatch of Slop Items 687.43
Transfer from 1989 Tour Account to Asst/Secretary's Phone A/C. 20.00	Postal Expenses Treasurer 95.00
Transfer for 1990 Tour - phone calls to Murmansk 46.60	Postal Expenses Secretary 85.00
	Postal Expenses Asst/Secretary 186.13
Carried Forward 92,296.40	Telephone Expenses L.Lawrence 1.60
	Carried Forward 49,568.40

Brought Forward 92,296.40	Brought Forward 49,568.40
Received from Asst/Secretary towards telephone Bills 119.48	<u>TELEPHONE ACCOUNTS</u>
	Secretary June 1989 76.75
	" " Aug. "" 90.00
	" " Nov. "" 70.00
	" " Feb. 1990 80.00
	Asst/Secretary May 1989 112.48
	" " Aug. "" 110.75
	" " Nov. 1989 146.30
	" " Mar. 1990 148.62
	Membership Secretary 108.00
	Committee attendance expences 261.25
Interest. Deposit Account 220.18	Hire of Committee Rooms 73.10
	<u>HONORARIA</u>
	Secretary 110.00
Subscription Renewals for 1990/91 3,571.50	Asst/Secretary 82.50
	Treasurer 75.00
	Membership Secretary 75.00
	Deposit Portsmouth Reunion 19-5-90 75.00
<u>TOTALS:</u>	<u>£96,207.56</u>
Total Income 96,207.56	Current Account 945.98
Total Expenditure 51,255.15	Deposit Account 44,006.43
Balance £44,952.41	Total 44,952.41
	Allocated to 1990 USSR Tour 40,867.61
	Balance as at 31-3-1990 £ 4,084.80

Signed *S.W. Routledge*

Hon. Treasurer.

I have audited all accounts, inspected all receipts and certify that everything is correctly accounted for.

John S. S. Auditor.

<u>FIXED ASSETS as at 31-3-1990</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Estimated Value</u>
<u>HELD BY ASST/SECRETARY</u>		
Brother Electronic Typewriter AX45	1	£330.00
Paper Guillotine	1	10.00
Chairman's Block & Gavel	1	15.00
N.R.C.Christmas Cards & Envelopes	62	11.78
N.R.C.Windscreen Stickers	100	33.00
Lever Arch Files	6	
Printed Letterheads	750	
Union Flag, White Ensign, Red Ensign, Soviet Flag.	4	
<u>HELD BY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</u>		
Smith Corona Typewriter	1	15.00
N.R.C.Windscreen Stickers	141	47.00
Lapel Badges	210	155.40
Ties	16	73.60
Blazer Badges	20	98.00
Medal Holders	1	1.00
Wall Banners	6	14.70
N.R.C.Christmas Cards & Envelopes	3,300	627.00
Postage Stamps (Hon.Treasurer)	- 17 -	11.42
		TOTAL £1,442.90

"WELCOME ABOARD" TO NEW MEMBERS.

1026. DOYLE Christopher D. Ocean Faith.
41 Burgess Road, Aylesham, Canterbury, Kent
1027. CHARLES Gordon V. Howe
53 Stephens Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B76 8TS
1028. IVISON Tom
Box 43, Angus, Ontario, Canada
1029. ROBINSON Patrick Tracker/Trumpeter
45 Limes Road, Dudley, West Midlands.
1030. TURPIN John M. Myngs
27 Christine Ledger Square, Leamington Spa, Warwicks CV31 3BA
1031. WELLBELOVE Stephen J. Orwell
37 Avon Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2JX
1032. BROOM L.E. Malcolm
18 Blenheim Road, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 3YJ
1033. SMITH Frank C. Leamington
3 Eastfield Road, Maerske on Sea, Redcar, Cleveland TS11 6EE.
1034. RICHES Trevor S. MBE Westcott
The Cottage, The Heavens, Lypiatt, Stroud, Glos. GL6 7LY
1035. POOLE Leonard Opportune
192 Chignall Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2JE.
1036. PHOENIX Ashley S. Thyme
4 Windsor Avenue, Bangor, Co.Down, N.Ireland BT20 3DQ
1037. PRATT Edwin T. Berwick
27 Chilvers Court, Dugdale Street, Nuneaton, Warks CV11 5QB
1038. WILSON Michael D. Westcott
Hill Corner, Lower Luddenden, Halifax, W.Yorks HX2 6TB
1039. RICHES Douglas J. Speedwell
388 Derby Road, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DX.
1040. TURNER L.A. Westcott
4 North End, Wendlebury, Bicester, Oxon OX6 8PF
1041. LEE Ronald F. Howe
19 Martello Cottages, Dymchurch Road, Hythe, Kent CT21 6LZ
1042. HILL James Victorious/Venus
29 Langton Road, Holton-Le-Clay, Lincolnshire DN36 5BH
1043. DADE Ernest H. Suffolk/Howe
58 David Street, Grimsby, South Humberside.
1044. STANFORD D.V. Woodcock
397 Woodgrange Drive, Southend on Sea, Essex. SS1 3DY.
1045. TUCK N. Somali
13 Dugard Road, Cleethorpes, South Humberside.
1046. HOOPER Cyril C. Punjabi
'Birchroyd', Middle St., East Lambrook, South Petherton, Som. TA13 5HH.
1047. STRUDWICK Cyril C. Berwick
21 Drayton Road, North End, Portsmouth PO2 7HN
1048. BROWN Harry N. H.M.T. Vizalma
7 Redcar Grove, Grimsby, South Humberside DN32 9SY
1049. FARQUHARSON-ROBERTS S. Westcott
Hillcroft, 29 Church Road, Steep, Hants GU32 2DN

WELCOME ABOARD - more new members.

1050. CARTER William I.A. Liverpool/Belfast
49 Gravel Road, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 5AS
1051. WOODS William W.L. Hyderabad
April Cottages, West Street, North Creake, Norfolk NR21 9LQ.
1052. BULPITT John. Swift
Thorp's, Preston Candover, Basingstoke, Hants RG25 2EH
1053. SAYERS Arthur W. Swift
86 Hart Plain Avenue, Cowplain, Hants PO8 8RQ
1054. WHITE Hugh G. Mermaid.
16 Saffron Drive, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 4LS
1055. REGAN Daniel. Swift
45 Hastings Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH8 OHW
1056. JOHNSEN Arne. H.Nor.M.S. Stord
5 Edgcombe Close, Calsock Road, Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 9BS
1057. WILLIAMS Cyril Myngs
22 Cooke Street, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 4EG
1058. COLLINS Robert F. Empire Lawrence
116 Twickenham Road, Newton Abbott, Devon TQ12 4JH
1059. MARTIN Sidney A. Scourge
14 St Francis Road, Alverstoke Green, Gosport, Hants PO12 2UG
1060. MOORE Leslie T. Bickerton
32 Norman Avenue, Quinton, Birmingham B32 2EX
1061. WHEATCROFT William A. Argus (RAF attached FAA)
42 Swallowbeck Ave., Lincoln LN6 7HA.
1062. BILLINGTON George Albacore/Cambrian
32 Doodstone Avenue, Lostock Hall, Preston PR5 5TY
1063. AUSTIN William Active
Greenbank, 19 Gogarth Ave., Dwygyfylchi, Penmaenmawr, Gwnedd LL34 6PY
1064. KISMUL Frank R. H.Nor,M.S. St Albans
Willow Way, 5 Abney Court Drive, Bourne End, Bucks SL8 5DL
1065. NORTH Thomas C. Bellona
37 Lighthouse Close, Happisburgh, Norfolk NR12 0QE
1066. COLLINS R.D. Naval Party 100
Blenheim Lodge, Appledore, Kent.
1067. SWANN L.W. Scorpion
Curnerway Farm, Washbrook Lane, Allesley, Coventry WA2 KI
1068. FERRIS William E Myngs
166 Fromond Road, Weeke, Winchester, Hants SO22 6EF.
1069. WHITEHEAD Donald Scorpion
4 Old Hall Court, Main Road, Newton Regis, Tamworth, Staffs B79 ONA
1070. BALMFORTH William S. Myngs
7 Brownside Road, Burnley, Lancs BB10 3JU
1071. HALLIWELL Harold Vigilant
17a Abbey Close, Radcliffe, Lancashire M26 0PJ
1072. WATTS John W.E. Royalist
Bromham, 19 Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX6 7PX
1073. GRIFFETHS W.J. Kappel
28 Peverell Road, Dover, Kent CT16 2EN

Still more "WELCOME ABOARD"

1074. WINSLADE J.H. Starling
42 Coveham Crescent, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1AP
1075. BUTTON Leslie
Flat 2, Tolcarne House, Boston Square, Hunstanton, Norfolk PE36 6DT
1076. MILES Peter R. Belfast
15 Charing Close, Orpington, Kent, BR6 9SS.
1077. DAVIES Robert W. Musketeer
Paseo Romeo Y Julieth 10, Colonia San Jordi, Mallorca, Ballearics 655535.
1078. FROLICK C.D. HMAS Norman
Green Meadows Farm, 46 Inanda Road, Hillcrest, Natal, Rep. of S.Africa 3610.
1079. REID Richard A. HMCS Port Colborne
228 Empress Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada W12N 3T9.
1080. CUTHBERTSON Douglas A. Intrepid
Aros House, 13 Beacon Rise, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2NJ.
1081. ROBB James E. Amazon
3 Sutherland Close, Hythe, Kent CT12 6JT.
1082. MURRAY Thomas C. C.S.Cambria
4 Knigsley Place, Stanmore, Winchester, Hants SO22 4AX
1083. MINTERN Norman J. Rodney
Heanda, 1 Westbrook Road, Evercreech, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6LR.
1084. SMITH John R. N.P.100
Hayloft Cottage, Enstone, Oxford OX7 4LX
1085. SANSOM Berwick C. Kent
80 St David's Avenue, Dover, Kent CT17 9HN
1086. BOYLAN Denis P. Savage
31 Market Place, Brackley, Northants NN13 5AB
1087. KEENAN Peter Campania/Vindex
123 Alberta Avenue, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8AX
- 1088 MILLAR Alexander Marne
219d Gloucester Road, London W2 6HX
1089. Merry Bill Westcott
8 Scraftoft Lane, Leicester LE5 1HV

Above entries are up to 30th July 1990

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- HIGH D.C. 93 Tedworth Road, Bilton Grange, Hull, HU9 4AU.
- PARKER R.E. 4 Ridgewood Rise, Home Elderly, Uckfield, Sussex TN22 5SY.
- FRENCH R. 8 Witcombe Gardens, Milton, Portsmouth PO3 6AA.
- HENNESSEY E. 4 Gamrie Bay Court, Gardenstown, Banffshire AB4 3YJ.
- GOLDSMITH A. 7 Jubilee Way, Steeple Morden, Royston, Herts SG8 0NF.
- LUDFORD H. 30 Benlaw Grove, Felton, Northumberland NE65 9NG.
- THAKE R.E.J. 16 Leonard Davis House, Kiln Road, North Weald, Epping, Essex.
- RICKETTS Eric. Flat 61, Merlin Court, Keighley, BD21 1SP.

"CROSSED THE BAR"

WITH DEEP REGRET WE REPORT THE DEATHS OF THE FOLLOWING SHIPMATES

SCOTCHER H.S.	ex-	HMS LA MALOUINE
SAWERS F.B.	ex-	HMS KENT
SHEWARD J.	ex-	HMS NAIRANA
STACEY A.	ex-	HMS OBDURATE

One second it wasn't there, then suddenly it was - flashing silver fire outlined my gloved hands and danced round the rims of a signal lamp. Amazed, I glanced about me. The bridge was aglow with miniature sparklers. Every edge, every projection was alive with silver fire.

The bridge crews' heads and shoulders were covered in sparklers, we looked like incandescent gnomes. The mast was a breathtaking sight, it stood out against the black backdrop of the night like a giant Christmas tree, etched in silver light.

For a few brief moments the war, the U-boats, were forgotten as delighted officers, lookouts and gun crews marvelled at the phenomenon. Then suddenly it ceased, as if an ethereal hand had pulled a switch - and we were left to the black Arctic night as the convoy ploughed northwards to Russia.

Maurice Cross.

Note: St Elmo's Fire - An electrical discharge on tall objects at sea, or tops of trees, usually occurring during stormy weather.

Encyclopedia Britannica.

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WE ARE SAILING!

Remember Henry Swain? Henry is the club member who wrote in Northern Light N°.19, page 19, that he wanted to sail his 35 foot yacht to Murmansk. He said, "the ghosts of JW 65 still haunt me, perhaps sailing those waters will lay them at rest". Well, Henry has succeeded - my Murmansk informant (lovely Natasha), informed me on July 21st, that Henry arrived safely, to a great welcome and is having a hectic time in the city. Well done Henry - we look forward to your story in the next edition of Northern Light.

Editor.

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CONGRATULATIONS

Danielle Louise Dudley was christened on 3rd June at the Royal Marine Commando Training Centre, Lympstone, where her father is an instructor. Baby Danielle is the first great grand daughter of Bill and Florrie Ponder. Bill was also trained and confirmed at Lympstone.

Shouldn't think that happens too often!!

Mr & Mrs Albert Ward celebrated their Golden Wedding on 27th August. Bill recalls that on that date in 1940, his wife was just turned 18 and he was a Second Officer (with Master's Certificate) and receiving the princely sum of £17/7/6 per month plus £5 per month War Bonus. Bill reflects on today's pay rates and says "Were we born too early"?

Our years were the best, Bill!!

Wally & Gladys Riley of Liverpool celebrated their Golden Wedding on 23rd March last. Wally, as well as being a N.R.C. member, is Hon Sec. of Captain Walkers Old Boys Association and the Old Boys presented Gladys and Wally with a surprise present - a weeks holiday in Jersey.

Did you enjoy the sea trip Glad? or shouldn't I mention it?

Leslie & Grace Harris of Storrington have top honours though - they had their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 7th June 1990. Now, 3 children, 9 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren later, Leslie says he offered Grace a divorce on the day after the wedding, but she didn't accept the offer.

It hasn't been sixty years hard labour, has it Grace?

WE WANT MORE ANNIVERSARIES TO CELEBRATE IN THE NEXT EDITION

SEND THE INFORMATION TO THE EDITOR BY THE END OF OCTOBER.

On 12th July a small party of members met at Portsmouth to visit the Soviet Destroyer "Bezuprechny". We were met at the gangway by Andrei Sokolov, a Russian interpreter who we had previously met in Murmansk this year. He gave us a conducted tour of the ship, we were then taken to a furnished reception area for drinks and snacks.

It wasn't long before Rear Admiral Vasiley Petrovitch Yerebin, Commanding Officer of the Northern Fleet was introduced. He gave a speech of welcome and then made a presentation of a plaque made up of a photograph of the British Cemetery in Murmansk and a small shell case filled with earth from the cemetery. The photo on the plaque had been taken before the ship left for Portsmouth, the sailors on the photo were crew members of "Beruprechny".

I responded on behalf of N.R.C. and R.C.C. Gifts were exchanged including the video of our last visit to Russia handed over by Harold Hewitt. We then toasted each other. It was filmed by Soviet T.V. - the same T.V. crew who saw us off at Gatwick in May and the Pravda reporter was there too.

Lieut. Commr. R.P. (Rick) Moore R.N. recently returned from Moscow was there too, he was the Naval Attache who joined our party in Murmansk.

Bill Weeks



Unknown Gordon Childs Bill Weeks Rear Admiral Joe Day Leslie Harris
(RNA) (NRC) (NRC) V.P. Yerebin. (RCC) (NRC)

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H. M. S. "WESTCOTT"

On the 14th April a reunion of five officers and twenty-one crew of the old V & W destroyer took place at the Victory Services Club in London. Ten wives also attended.

What a wonderful reunion! There were many photographs and newspaper cuttings. Lieut. Noel Britton brought along a model which he had made and was much admired, as was the painting by Harold Howell which George Purslow had brought - it had only been completed twenty-four hours earlier.

Many tales were retold and debated as we sat down to a first class meal. One of the lads who wishes to remain anonymous subsidised the meal and footed the bar bill!!

Continued.

The artist H. Howell donated £100 towards the festivities, and Mrs Nicholls, sister-in-law of George Nicholls who through illness could not attend, sent a cheque for £20. A grand time was had by all.

A raffle raised £102 and this was donated to the Arctic Campaign Memorial Trust, not bad for a party of thirty-six. Since our reunion at least another twelve crew have been contacted and hopefully before our next reunion others will be added to the list.

'Stormy' Fairweather.

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Shipmates reunion after 48 years

TWO SHIP mates who were stranded in a life boat together for eight days in the freezing Arctic sea met again last week after 48 years.

Frank Brown, aged 68, from Stirlingale Road, Bath, met Reg Waller, also 68, from Gosport, Hampshire, nearly half a century after their freighter sank when it was dive-bombed by German aircraft.

They met again at the North Russian Club's sixth annual area dinner last Wednesday at Buckland Dinham - all of which was a complete surprise to Frank.

The reunion was the work of the club's area organiser Curly Morris of Green Lane, Frome.

He was looking through the club's newsletter and discovered both the members had served on the S S Bolton Castle.

Curly then visited Reg in Gosport in February and asked him about the reunion, and Reg agreed.

Convoy PQ 17.

Frank joined the ship in

June 1942, it was on a voyage to Murmansk, Russia in convoy PQ17.

The attacks on the convoy started on July 4, 1942, when several ships were lost, the next day the ships scattered.

"Then the troubles started in earnest" said Frank.

Reg, then 20, remembers the Junkers swooping in, but none got very close.

But when Frank, also 20, looked a minute later and had just turned to get more "ammo" he witnessed a very different sight.

"I looked up just as a Junkers 88 pulled out of a dive and three bombs were on their way.

I just stood there and watched them get bigger and bigger."

"One or more bombs landed in number two hold which was loaded with cordite. This exploded and enveloped the ship in flames."

Whale danger

Lifeboats were launched and the crew watched as the ship sank in 13 minutes.

There were 37 men in Reg and Frank's boat and they happened to be facing each

other.

Water and biscuits were their only rations. There was no protection against the freezing Arctic temperatures.

Frank remembers fearing the boat would tip when on day two in the life boat a huge whale plagued them.

"A whale came up alongside us and cavorted about for sometime. It was a lot bigger than our boat we were glad to see it depart," said Frank.

After eight days adrift a Russian trawler finally rescued them and took them to a hospital in Polyarnoe.

Shortly afterwards the two men split up as Frank was in Army personnel and Reg was in the Merchant Navy. The have not seen each other since until last Wednesday.

Reg is now retired, and lives with his wife Jean. He worked for the Ministry of Defence as a salvage bosun for 27 years.

Frank worked at St Martin's Hospital, Bath, where he retired as a radiologist's assistant.

The above reunion at Buckland Dinham was organised by E. 'Curly' Morris of Frome, it has now become a regular annual 'do' for local members. If you require news of the next function please contact Curly at 54 Green Lane, Frome BA11 4JU. Oh, thanks Curly and shipmates for the £11 to club funds, raised by the raffle of a bottle of rum.

Why not organise a function in your own area? Contact the Hon. Sec. if you require further information or guidelines.

FROM THE POSTBAG

From Albert L Ward, Membership N°.820.

Dear Editor,

My wife and I have just had a holiday in Scotland. We stayed at a small country inn owned by a young couple from Rams-gate., and we would like to recommend them.

They are very, very reasonable, all home cooked food and plenty of it. It is in the heart of the River Spey, which I am given to understand is the best fishing in the world, and if anyone is interested, they are in the heart of the "Whisky Trail". More distilleries than I ever thought existed.

They are about 18 miles South of Elgin and about 20 miles S.E. of Inverness. If anybody has any ideas about it, I would be pleased to give them any directions. Their address is:- Mr, R. Stokes, "The Carron Inn", Carron, Banffshire, Scotland. Tel:03406 228.

Yours sincerely,

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Albert L Ward

From Ian R Fraser, Membership No:413

Dear Dick,

I understand the Russian trip along with RCC was a great success. I too, have recently been to the USSR, in my case Moscow, this was by special invitation from Russian radio amateurs who with permission organised a special radio station to be manned by Russian Convoy Veterans, to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the end of the war. The qualifications required were that a participant had to have served on Russian convoy duty, and produce proof, to have been a radio operator during his convoy duty service, and to be holding a current radio amateurs licence issued by the Home Office or DTI, so it is not surprising that for the special Veterans Day May 9th. there were only two of us who qualified. Representing NRC was Les Whiteman and myself. Les and I served together for 3½ years, and he was able to fit in as a "short wave listener".

I am also proud to say that I was also, as far as is known, granted the first radio reciprocal licence, to operate from any station, private or state, in the Moscow area using callsign UA3A/G3BWN, which meant that I could use my callsign G3BWN, and the suffix for the Moscow area which is UA3A - as I say, as far as is known, the first non-Russian to be granted such an honour. Needless to say members of the Royal Navy Amateur Radio Society, and our Russian amateur radio friends were well to the fore, with the rest of the world , in the air queue.

It was arranged that Les, if possible should be presented with his Commemorative Medal, this was presented by the ex-admiral of the Black Sea and Arctic fleets at a private Veteran naval officers dinner.....the dinner lasted nearly six hours and copious amounts of cognac, vodka and wine were drunk, quite a cocktail. The food was of the highest quality, fresh crab from the Black Sea, two types of caviar, the table was groaning. It was amazing where it all came from, in honour of three British ex radio operators. They even managed to find some rum for the toasts.

As is the way of family life in Russia, the toasts were frequent and most sincere. At the end of the dinner the table was empty, talk about "dig in mate" have you ever known "Jack" to be slow in the grub and drink stakes? Then guess what? Whilst the presentations and speeches were going on, the ladies of the house had reset the table, and there we were again,

more glorious food and liquid refreshment. Then the lady of the house, Svetlana, was brought through from the kitchen to receive her toasts. On certain occasions ladies are not allowed to sit at table.

On the flight back, again British Airways, Les and myself were given the full VIP treatment. The flight director Jemma Peters extended an invitation from Captain Hammond to join him on the flight deck, we were then flying at 39,000 ft. in a 757. Although like most radio amateurs I consider myself to be fairly well up on electronics, I must admit I was lost in the complexity of the modern instrument display. We were up there for ¼ hour. Very sincerely,

Ian R Fraser

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From Doug. Riches. Membership No.1039.

I joined SPEEDWELL in July '41 and we went to Polyarnoe in October '41, returning home in March '42.

In the early days SPEEDWELL had a number of seaman and stoker ratings who had gone out on pension or at the end of short service engagements in the mid-thirties and were then called up for the emergency. Understandably, they were in the main not willing or happy recruits. We had a two-badge 'Stoker F.A.' - on 'Cuts' Edwards - who, when we got to Polyarnoe, for reasons not known to us at the time went back to U.K. in EDINBURGH. It later transpired that he was elected unopposed as Labour M.P. for the London seat of Whitechapel and St Georges. He was the first to go to Parliament from the lower deck.

Shortly after the end of the war, I was in Whitehall on leave and a flash official chauffeur driven car sped by, and who should be in the back, with hand on the strap but dear old 'Cuts', no longer a two-badge F.A. nor even a mere Member of Parliament but the First Lord of the Admiralty in the Attlee government, responsible for the administration of Naval Dockyards. I saluted although I doubt if he had seen, but I saw a look of satisfaction on his face and a different 'Cuts' that I had last seen in Polyarnoe.

Doug. Riches

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Now, our resident poet has a few words to say about Polyarnoe:

As to Mr. Rathbone's letter in N.L. 20, page 22. If he was billeted at the Submarine Base, as I was part of the time in 1942, and where that epic show, Russia's first British Pantomime - "Jack in Joe's Land" was rehearsed and put on with no expense spared! then he was not in 'Dodge City'. This was the wooden built Russian village on the ridge at the back of Polyarnoe, looking down on Navy House and the Submarine Base. It had wooden sidewalks and hitching posts and we had mounted Ruski soldiers riding down it's earth street from time to time. It also had a wooden trestle bridge leading into it if I recall correctly. If it only had had the 'Last Chance Saloon' with a honky tonk piano and a General Store, Stalin could have made some great Western films there, such as "Guns along the Kola" or "Gunfight at the Rouski Corral". The mind boggles at the idea. One of the wooden houses was named Sherbrooke House after the gallant Captain of ONSLOW fame, and used I think for Survivors!

After the panto - I was sent to Murmansk and we got bombed regularly. I thought the critics were a bit harsh at my performance - surely, I wasn't so bad that banishment to Murmansk and getting the Jerries to bomb me, was a bit much!

Cheers

Bill Johnston

MORE FROM THE POSTBAG

Dear Editor,

The following item may interest our readers:

"Last night, I attended a choral concert in our local church given in aid of it's roof fund. Among the items was one by Christopher Tye (1500 - 1572). I knew he was knocking on a bit but....."

Peter Allen. H.M.S.SHEFFIELD.

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The article in Northern Light N°.20, reprinted from Algerine Newsletter, is of very special interest to me because I joined H.M.S. READY (MS18) as a Leading Telegraphist on Nov.2nd 1943.

After being part of Naval Party 100 at Polyarnoe, on the Kola Inlet, for about 16 months I returned to depot (Chatham) to complete a higher W/T course. A draft chit to READY followed and almost immediately on joining we left on an exercise called "Sugar Fox" which was - 'Surprise Surprise' - in the Arctic! It consisted of rolling around those Arctic waters (what a familiar scene) shepherding convoys and hunting U-boats.

Xmas Day 1943 remains very clear in my memory. We were at anchor at Reykjavik and I well remember attending Divisions and Church Parade on board. The CO made a nice little speech, apologising for the fact that we were having to spend such a Holy Day in such an unHoly place. He went on to remark "...But we could have been at sea", at which an unidentified Celtic voice from the depths of the ranks clearly remarked "Aye, we could have been in Aberdeen tae!"

Little did our Highland shipmate know that Fate was going to take a very large hand in subsequent proceedings.....which would cheer him up no end.

After a short break we went to our shepherding, hunting lark and it wasn't long before we ran into the kind of Arctic weather with which members of NRC will have become familiar. Our battering by the elements resulted in not inconsiderable damage to the upper deck....guard rails etc. and what turned out to be, the loss of our rolling checks. After close inspection in the floating dock at Reykjavik it was decided that we would have to go elsewhere for the work to be done, so we were ordered towait for it.....ABERDEEN!!

Repairs to the ship were pretty extensive and made 3 weeks leave to each watch. To make the whole affair more memorable it was the only time in my Naval career that I received a telegram whilst on leave extending that leave... .. by 5 days!!

Les.A.Sullivan. H.M.S.READY.

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Hi! Editor,

My Short Story - "The Iceland Incident"

Back in 1941, serving in SHEFFIELD - it was my birthday 4th March, we had refuelled in Iceland and were heading north to join a convoy to Murmansk. Just one hour into the first watch, suddenly there was a terrific crash on our port quarter.

I with several others was in the Port Pom Pom's caboose. A voice arose - "We've been hit! Thank God, now we will get some leave". "Aye" I said, "But we may have to swim home first"! A 'fish' had struck us aft between the port screws.

Two destroyers that we had left in Iceland refuelling picked up the distress signal - dropped everything and rushed to our aid, through very rough seas, losing upper deck lockers, boats, etc. in their haste, thinking there may be six-hundred souls in the sea. But, there was 'OL' SHINY' rolling around like a ruptured duck with a whacking big hole in her side. Sadly, the Royal Marine Keyboard Sentry had been stuck on the by a piece of electrical channel. Our Surgeon Commander tried to save him, but alas - we were rolling so badly it was impossible. The Royal Marine died. The destroyer escorted us back to

Iceland at 6 knots, then returned to join the convoy. We were out of the war for the time being.

Next morning, the diving cutter was lowered, we watched from the pom-pom gun deck (we maintained a twenty-four hour watch). I was amazed - the cutter went in through the hole and tied up, inboard! For many weeks, the whole ships company slaved away making a huge wooden patch to go over the hole, then when it was in place, eventually, wires were passed around the ship and secured on the quarterdeck with bulldog grips - there were dozens of them - wires I mean. Next, the Chippies, then known as the 'Patch Party', shored up inboard. We had scrounged dozens of railway sleepers from ashore. I became a member of the 'Coke Party' when off watch from pom-pom duty. We went ashore to an army coke dump, filled hundreds of sand-bags with coke, to bung into the hole.

Whilst all this activity was going on, the only recreation was to go to a frozen lake to skate. An army sergeant issued the skates from a little wooden hut. I'll never forget the kids there - all budding Sonia Henies with rosy cheeks, they put us all to shame, we were like drunken matelots and we had only had our tot - or something from the Goffer Bar during the dog watches.

Eventually we went to sea to try out our handiwork. It was very rough outside and we soon lost the patch - we had to go back and start all over again - honest! One good thing though, the G.P.O. knew where we were and we got regular mail deliveries.

My brother, in the First Paras. had invited me to his wedding in early June. There we were slogging away in Iceland with no respite. But we worked hard, knowing that once we got 'Old Shiny' to U.K. there would be some leave. Well, the great day came, our skipper 'Charlie' Larkham, told us that a drydock on the Tyne was waiting for us, or bust we will make it! Aye, we did!!! Not a scrap of timber, wire or coke was to be seen as we steamed up the Tyne amid rapturous cheers from ashore. Back to her birthplace to be repaired, ready to go back to sea and the enemy.

We paid off!! Three weeks leave!! I made it to my brother's wedding!! I returned to "Chatty" Chats, where within a month I was drafted to submarines, but that is another story.

W.A. (Max) Horton.

'Old Shiny Sheff' lives on in the memories of the H.M.S.Sheffield Association and the Most Honoured name lives on - now as a frigate.

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Dear Shipmate,

I would like to tell you that I have Admiral Doenitz's Battle Ensign and I would like the club to have it eventually. It is quite valuable, as enquiries to reputable auctioneers say they cannot estimate its valuables. Do any other club members have souvenirs or memorabilia ?

G.E.Kelly, 'Antelope'

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Dear Sec.

.....all the way to Murmansk to lose my Commemorative Medal. I was ***** wild when I found it missing. One of our guides took the particulars, and handed them on. Perhaps I will hear something sometime!!

Arthur Bartle. 'Honeysuckle'

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Dear Mr. Squires,

I have written a novel entitled HMS CRUSADER which is due to be published by Barrie and Jenkins on 2nd August. It is about a fictitious escort carrier and the final third, and most exciting part, of the story, is set in a fictitious Russian convoy in February-March 1944. It has been suggested that you might be willing to publicise the book in the North Russia Club magazine.

A.E. Langsford, North Shields

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WORLD WAR TWO ARCTIC CAMPAIGN MEMORIAL TRUST

Registered Charity No. 802671

The committee and trustees of the Trust wish to convey their thanks to all those kind people making contributions since the last list was published in Northern Light No.20, and by so doing, ensuring the success of this worthy cause:

Beiley L.V.	North Russia Club
Morris W.J.	" " " (misquoted on previous list)
Johnson Joe.	Public
Shaw S.	North Russia Club
H.M.S. Westcott	Reunion
Gregory F.	Beecham (Retired)
Baker H.R.G.	North Russia Club
Cole M.F. (Man Dir.)	Tudor Photographic
Jeffery A.	D/JX 288565 R.N.
Quick Pix Photolab.	Photographic Printers
Canada Life Assurance	Sponsors
City Office Equipment	Photocopiers
DeVoyle Lytho	Stationery Printers
Worthy W.E. family and	friends. W.E.Worthy (N.R.C.); B.Taylor ex Dido;
	P.J.Clarke; W.J.Warren (Royal Corps Signals);
	A.J. Worthy (son & daughter-in-law): J.A. Worthy;
	(R.A.S.C.) brother; M.Naylor (R.A.F.) brother
	in law.
Whyte E.	North Russia Club
Johnson	" " "
Ward A.L.	" " "
Capt.S. Farquharson-Roberts O.B.E. R.N. (Rtd)	North Russia Club.
Capt.K.A.R. Clarke R.N.R. (Rtd)	" " "
Tyler L.G.	North Russia Club
North Russia Club A.G.M.) "Terrell Tower" collections
North Russia Club Ladies Night)

Signed on behalf of A. C. M. T. *Jan Wain*.....Secretary

What a splendid idea of Ted Worthy's - to involve his family and friends in making a joint donation to the Trust. I commend it to you. There are so many different ways you can help in raising funds - the family - the local - the British Legion or R.N.A. Branch - wherever you are known, there will be someone prepared to help our Charity Trust.

Do you require a Deed of Covenant Form or a Direct Debit Instruction Form? If so, please phone me on 0707 55846.

By the way, it's the Charity Fund that receives the Tax benefit - not the donor, as stated in the last Northern Light.

Les Lawrence still requires another twenty pledges from members willing to order Logo Badges, pullovers, etc., before it becomes a viable venture he is waiting for your letter. Send no money now. His address is:-

25 Maricas Avenue, Harrow Weald, Middx. HA3 6SA

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Club Member,

For two years now, Ron Wren and his small committee drawn from our club and the Russian Convoy Club, have worked hard and diligently to set the Arctic Campaign Memorial Trust up and to place it on a sound base for the launch of the appeal. It was no easy matter obtaining charitable status.

May I remind you of the objectives of the Trust:

- (1). To erect 'Fixed Memorials' to those who died in the Arctic, to be placed in a main London Church, i.e. St Paul's and in other suitable churches, plus on in a suitable situation in Murmansk.
- (2). To develop a Trust Fund "Living Memorial" to give financial support to students of languages and social studies, to help them exchange visits with students abroad. The Trust will be inclined to direct this aid to members of Arctic Campaign Veteran's families.

So now we have to make progress - already we are in close co-operation with a similar Trust Fund in the Soviet Union, 'Eternal Memory to Soldiers', who are funding our first memorial in the city centre in Murmansk. Anatoley Bezeglov and I had the privilege to unveil a stone marking the spot, on Victory Day, May 9th, this year. The ceremony was witnessed by our combined tour party and a photo appears below. Also, we are now beginning to get a trickle of school children and students from Murmansk, visiting member's homes and families in U.K. It is a lot easier for them to get visas, following my representations to our Moscow Embassy.

I now appeal for your cash - it does not matter if it is a few pence or a large cheque, the Fund will gratefully accept any donation. Lets see if we can raise a four-figure sum from this appeal. Just mark your donation "N.L." and mail it to Ron Wren. We would also appreciate your ideas on fund-raising - perhaps you have a piece of memorabilia that we could auction or raffle, or you may have other ideas on appeals. Please let Ron know.

Sincerely
Sir R. Squires
EDITOR.

The inscription reads:

THE MEMORIAL TO THE
PARTICIPANTS OF THE ALLIED
NAVAL CONVOYS BRINGING AID TO
OUR PEOPLE DURING THE YEARS OF
THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1941-1945
WILL BE ERECTED IN MURMANSK
THE MEMORIAL WILL BE BUILT
BY THE INTERNATIONAL
NON-GOVERNMENTAL FUND
"ETERNAL MEMORY TO SOLDIERS"





The Friends of the Imperial War Museum

Patron-in-Chief: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother

Lambeth Road London SE1 6HZ
Telephone: 071-416-5255

R. D. SQUIRES Esq
Hon Secretary
North Russia Club

30-7-90

Dear Mr. Squires,

Please excuse the liberty we take in writing to you, but the notice in the Sunday Express regarding the reunion of Arctic Campaign Veterans prompts us to ask if you would mind circulating information about the Friends of the Imperial War Museum to your old colleagues.

The Friends were recently formed under the gracious patronage of H.M. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother with the objects of supporting the Museum and giving publicity to it and its outstations, HMS Belfast, the Cabinet War Rooms and Duxford Airfield.

The Museum preserves and exhibits the objects and artifacts from the two World Wars and the minor conflicts of the 20th century in which Great Britain has been involved. This keeps alive the memory of all who died or who suffered during these times. Many of our members are veterans or their descendants.

You will find enclosed a leaflet about the Friends, and if any more can be passed around your group, or anyone would like an application form, please let us know at the Friends' Office at the above address.

With best wishes for an enjoyable reunion.

Yours sincerely

John Solway (signed)

Honorary Assistant Secretary.

Registered Charity No.294360.

Any club member requiring further details should write direct to the Museum.

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AUTOGRAPHS WANTED

42 Lakers Rise,
Woodmansterne Banstead,
Surrey SM7 3JY

Dear Mr Squires,

I am a keen hobby collector of Royal Naval Postal Covers and I have covers of the awards of the D.S.O., D.S.C and D.S.M. of which I try to get them signed by holders of the awards.

Do you have any holders of these awards in your Association? If so, could you put them in touch with me. I hope you can help me in my hobby.

Thank you, sincerely

Kevin Timms.

Anyone willing to help?

HIS
DRIP
TIN
OVERFLOWS!!
CARDS
ONLY
£3 FOR 10.
From Les Sullivan

ORDER NOW!!

THANKS



REMINDERS

IMAGES OF WAR: Use the enclosed pamphlet when ordering, to ensure the discount payment to Arctic Campaign Memorial Trust.

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SIXTH ANNUAL REUNION DINNER Dont delay with your reservations, places are being filled very quickly - write to Les Jones, at 35 Neargates, Charnock Richard, Chorley, Lancs, NOW!!

Dont reserve your room at the Swallow Hotel until after you have contacted Les.

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1991 TOURS TO MURMANSK On August 1st we already had 62 places provisionally booked for the tours. 4th to 11th May Murmansk and 5th to 12th October Murmansk and Archangel. Contact me by phone or letter if you wish to be placed on the mailing list. (Address on Page One)

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SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1990-1991 Just a few of you have not paid your Annual Subscriptio (£6) to Les Sullivan. We are sure that it is an oversight, we are confident that you are not leaving us. Do it now. Les's address is also on Page One.

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S T O P P R E S S

A few more new members - "Welcome Aboard Shipmates"

- 1090 BURDEN Peter G. Tavy
Teranara, Basingstoke Road, Spencerswood, Reading RG7 1AP.
1091. CHATT Tom Byron
14 Church Street, Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill, Co. Durham DL17 9AF.
1092. CLARK E. Westcott.
35 Pine Grove, Bushey, Herts WD2 2DY.
1093. ASHTON Richard R. Onslow/Offa
9 Springfield Close, Formby, Merseyside L37 2LL

LIST COMPLETE TO 4TH AUGUST 1990

THE PHOENIX.....did not rise from the ashes but from Leningrad Airport.....and became the first member of N.R.C. to be enrolled in mid-air.....30,000 feet over Stockholm..... that was Ashley Phoenix (No.1036) of Bangor, Co.Down, N.Ireland.

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A MINI-REUNION

A Sunday Lunchtime Gathering of Merseyside, North West and North Wales members will take place in the C.P.O's Mess, H.M.S. EAGLET, Princes Dock Liverpool on Sunday 23rd September from 1215 to 1445. Cost of Buffet £3.00 per person includes a donation to the Arctic Campaign Memorial Trust Fund. **It is important that you book at once with me, for Catering and Gangway Security Check List reasons.**

Come along and do a bit of 'Lamp Swinging'

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Why not organise a 'Lamp Swinging' session in your area? we will help or advise if we can.

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"NORTHERN LIGHT No.22"

December's edition will have **The "O" Boats** as it's main theme - we already have stories from 'Onslow', 'Offa', 'Obedient' and 'Opportune', so come on 'Obdurate', 'Onslaught', 'Oribi' and 'Orwell' - dont let the flotilla down.

Note: Despite a few merchant navy members reminding us that 'a boat' hangs from the davits and that destroyers are ships, we will not change our references. Our beloved destroyers were known by the crews as 'Boats' and 'Boats' they will always be.

Editor.

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