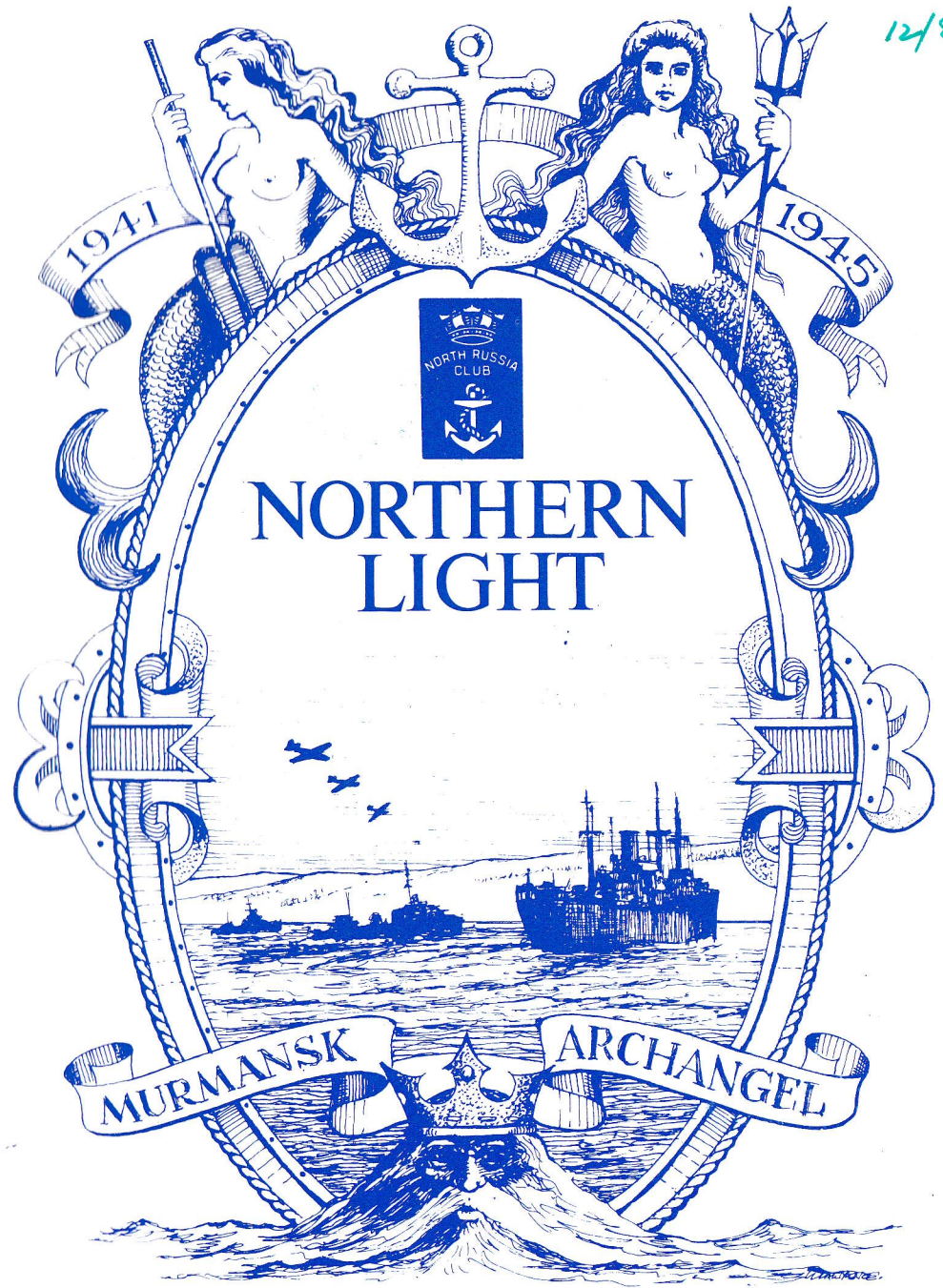


14
12/88



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH RUSSIA CLUB

12/88

DECEMBER 1988

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

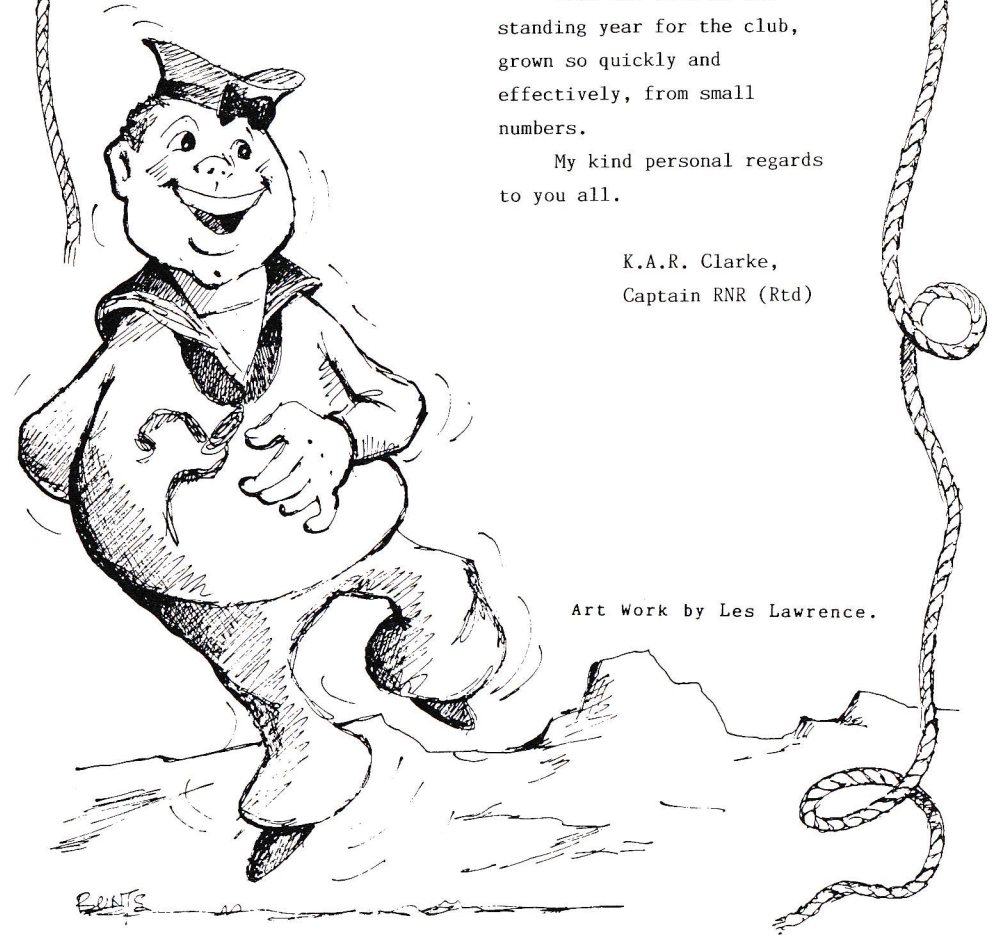
Again this year Northern Light gives me an opportunity I welcome, of sending my good wishes for Christmas and the New Year to each and every one of our 740 or so club members.

1988 has been an outstanding year for the club, grown so quickly and effectively, from small numbers.

My kind personal regards to you all.

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

Art Work by Les Lawrence.



EDITORIAL

In presenting this, the last edition of Northern Light for 1988, I trust that the contents will be as interesting to you as they are to me. It certainly is an interesting job, reading through all of your contributions and finally deciding what items to publish, which to hold until the next edition, which to 'pidgeon-hole' and which to tactfully place on file! The vast majority of members are unable to participate in other activities of the club and your letter boxes are the only means of providing with benefits of membership. I trust that you all consider that you have had your five quids worth, and that early in 1989 you will be 'going round the bouy'.

The main article this time, is the official report submitted to the Admiralty by the Commanding Officer of H.M.S. 'Edinburgh' following her sinking. We intend to run main feature articles in at least, all of the 1989 editions. Next issue's feature is the Operations Report of Convoy JW64, so if any of you have a tit bit or two which would embellish the feature, please let me have them soon. With so many significant anniversaries on the horizon, we could celebrate them with main feature articles.

Now to deal with your complaints. Both, in my opinion, are unavoidable. The first concerns the 'Pen Picture' series on your officers and committee - I'm afraid they are in the pidgeon hole, because of lack of space! The second is one which I sympathise with, but at this stage am not able to rectify. It concerns the size of print used in Northern Light. If I use larger type size I get less on a page, we cannot afford more pages as it costs the same to print a sheet with one word as it does to print one with five hundred. It's what is known as Editorial Dilemma! But I would appreciate your views on the matter.

Wishing you and your families a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous, Healthy and Peaceful New Year.

R. D. Squit
Editor Dick.

FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE AT WESTMINSTER

A Poppy Plot was allocated to 'ARCTIC CAMPAIGN VETERANS' during this years Remembrance week-end. Unfortunately, we did not receive confirmation of this in time to notify you all in advance. However, members of the committee, together with representatives of other convoy veterans, provided a plot which was in keeping with the occasion. Next year, we expect to be allocated a larger area and you will all have the opportunity to contribute or participate in this act of remembrance. Also, in future, if you require to provide a poppy wreath, complete with North Russia Club motif centre piece, for your own war memorial, these are now obtainable through the club, or your local Royal British Legion or R.N.A.



"AT THE GOING DOWN
OF THE SUN
AND IN THE MORNING
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM"

"ARCTIC CAMPAIGN VETERANS POPPY PLOT" at Westminster Abbey, Thursday 10th November.

(Photo by Chris Darge)

"SECRETS OUT OF RUSSIAN CONVOY PERIL"

SEAS POUND DOWN FUNNEL OF A BATTLESHIP.

From ARTHUR OAKESHOTT,

Reuter's Special Correspondent with the Home Fleet

THROUGH gales which tore guns from their mountings, under Arctic conditions so intense that cold iron blistered a man's hand, and in face of the Luftwaffe, the German fleet and its U-boats, British convoys have been running supplies to Russia for three years.

I sailed with every convoy, and voyaged 86,000 miles, but only now can the full story be told. It is a story of which the under-publicised Royal Navy can be proud.

Just how much the Navy took to Murmansk cannot be revealed, but frequently a convoy arrived without loss. Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, told the Commons last March that 88 per cent. of the cargoes got through. The percentage since then has been considerably higher and the numbers of convoys infinitely greater.

Last May, the Prime Minister said that in addition to over £80,000,000 worth of raw materials, foodstuffs, machinery, industrial plant, medical supplies and comforts, well over 5,000 tanks and 6,000 aircraft had reached the Soviet Union

Again, from my personal knowledge of events since then, I can increase that figure.

What the men of the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy went through during those bitter, dark, icy winters of '42, '43 and '44, and the long daylight trips in summer when they could be attacked by aircraft, is a grim record of devotion to duty.

From H.M.S. Scylla in September, '42, on my first run with a convoy, I saw ships lost and many brave men blown to pieces.

Sometimes weather was the worst enemy. In the great gale of March, 1943, the cruiser Sheffield lost the enormous cover of "A" gun-turret—swept off by heavy seas.

In that storm, ships were stripped of boats, lifebelts and Carley floats. Even Oerlikon guns were torn adrift from their mountings and lost.

The seas rose to such heights that they crashed from above on to the 60-ft. high bridge of a County class cruiser or pounded down "green" into the funnels of a battleship.

In that same gale the convoy was completely scattered. Some ships were scores of miles from their "mates." But the Royal Navy rounded them up and shepherded the convoy out of the storm area and through what is called the "critical area," where U-boats abound, into the safety of Kola Inlet, North Russia.

On that job we went to action stations because a ship was reported to be an enemy cruiser. She turned out to be one of our merchantmen, 190 miles off her course and charging through a British minefield. We gave her a new course.

That convoy reached Russia without loss.

TWENTY BELOW ZERO

With temperatures anything from 12 degrees below freezing point to 20 or more below zero, tons of frozen spray had to be chipped off the ships.

Many a man was injured on this work. A wave would hit the ship and he would slide into the scuppers with a smashed head or a broken limb.

I have seen a man incautiously place his hand on frozen metal and leave the skin of his hand behind. He had sustained an inverse burn, so low was the temperature.

I sailed at least nine times in H.M.S. Belfast with Admiral "Bob" Burnett (now C-in-C. South Atlantic, but among the other cruisers engaged in that hazardous and unpleasant task were: Norfolk, Kent, Jamaica, Trinidad (which was lost), Edinburgh (sister-ship to Belfast—also lost), Cumberland, Sheffield, Black Prince and Scylla.

Among the famous destroyers on the Russian run were: Onslaught, Marne, Meteor, Somali (I saw her sunk), Quilliam, Onslow (in which Capt. Sherbrook won the V.C.), Athabaskan (lost) and Ashanti.

One battleship steamed over 50,000 miles in the Arctic—almost a record even for the hard-worked destroyers, and, for a battleship, unprecedented.

The Russians were grateful and did all they could for us. In Murmansk the Navy was given the free run of the Red Navy Club at Polyarnoc and skiing, tobogganing and skating facilities were

BACK NUMBERS OF "NORTHERN LIGHT"

The editor has the following stock of back numbers, members are welcome to them on a 'first come, first served' basis.

- Edition No 5 - December 1986 - 10 in stock.
- " " No 6 - March 1987 - 6 in stock.
- " " No 7 - June 1987 - 6 in stock.
- " " No 9 - December 1987 - 6 in stock.
- " " No 10 - March 1988 - 15 in stock.

There is no charge but a donation to cover postage etc. would be welcome. Apply to editor (by phone to confirm availability.)
R.D.Squires. 051 487 9567.

YOUR LETTERS

First, one to the Treasurer:

Dear Eric,
I wrote an article for our local paper recently, regarding our USSR visit last May. I got paid!!
So, heres a cheque for the club funds.
Cheers,
Yours,
M.C. (name supplied)



Thanks, shipmate, your donation is greatly appreciated.

Next, excerpts from a letter received by our Hon. Sec.

Dear Blue Nosed Shipmates,

I was one of the lucky ones who was reasonably comfortable by comparison with those whose duty was to man the smaller ships. I served in 'LONDON' for most of 1941 and all of 1942 plus part of 1943 and well recall how she behaved in some of the storms and tempests we actually welcomed, because it often meant that the enemy was absent. I have often wondered how it might be possible to pay adequate tribute to the skilled and hardworking Shipmates who served in the Destroyers, Armed Trawlers, Frigates, Corvettes and Rescue Ships which were usually hastily converted ferries, and all the other types of smaller craft which formed escorts for the convoys.

Between 'LONDON' taking Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Avrill Harriman of the USA to Archangel and back soon after Russia was invaded in 1941, until I was finally swung out stretcher borne on 'LONDON's port seaplane crane to be left behind in the Nissen huts that served as a hospital at Hvitanes in 1943, I have a jumble of memories. Those that persist are of the glassy sea in mid-summer, where nothing larger than a sparrow could go unobserved and Faithful Freddie, usually a Blomm & Voss 140, circling around the convoy just out of gun range. In those conditions it was often necessary to refuel the smaller escorts whilst keeping pace with the convoy. I recall a forenoon in winter when 'MATCHLESS' was suspended bow and stern on two huge waves whilst I could see daylight beneath her. How she lived through that sea I do not know. Of course, the memory which stands out clearly against all the others is that of PQ17. 'LONDON', 'NORFOLK', 'TUSCALOOSA' and 'WICHITA' were the close cover cruiser force during one of those glassy summer periods without even darkness as an aid. We had already weathered some days wherein we had fought off the worst of the air and submarine attacks, when we heard our Captain address the Ships Company on the SRE system. He told us that the convoy had been ordered to "scatter" due to a threat from superior surface ships from Norway, which was believed to include 'TIRPITZ', 'SCHARNHORST' and 'HIPPER'. In consequence of this we had received orders from the Admiralty to withdraw and join the Home Fleet which was hurrying north from Scapa Flow. My memory may be faulty as to the timing of our meeting with the Fleet but I do recall joining up with them some fairly short period

later, by which time most of the horrific losses of PQ17 had already occurred. 'LONDON' was a very happy ship but that withdrawal from the convoy made me and many of my shipmates feel very nearly mutinous. The record of history shows countless instances of the folly of fighting naval engagements from a desk, far removed from the action by ageing warriors whose current experience is second hand at best. I am still convinced that, had we been allowed to fight our way through, the losses would have been smaller. It was fortunate that soon after this the convoys were accompanied by some air support.

On a more personal note, I am sure I share one very happy memory of those days in 'LONDON', when I recall the magnificent piano playing of Duggie Flood. What particularly sticks in my memory is his rendering of Sindling's "Rustle of Spring" which gives me pleasure to this day. I have searched our membership list but he does not appear. Is he still on this side of the Bar? Does any shipmate know?

May I conclude with heartfelt good wishes to you all, and Bon Voyage to whichever haven your destiny is set.

Sincerely
Charles J. De Val.

And now, one about old shipmates meeting after forty-six years and about medals, (no, not the one some of you are still worrying about)

Dear Editor,

I went up to London to meet Colin Page - also ex - GOSSAMER - on his return from the pilgrimage last May.

Colin and I spent the whole day talking, reminiscing and learning what had happened to each other and to other shipmates. After all, we had 46 years to catch up on - but we slipped into the old comradeship immediately.

He reminded me of the 'probable' U-boat which we got off the mouth of the Kola Inlet. That I believe was April 1942. We were working with another Fleet Sweeper (which I dont remember but probably 'HARRIER' or 'HUSSAR'). I remember the action very clearly, because being a signalman I was on the bridge throughout and it struck me at the time as a perfect text-book attack.

What I did not know (and which was kept very secret onboard that subsequent to the action the Russians awarded two medals to the C.O. for the ship.

I can just visualise Lieut Cmdr. Tom Crease pondering this, (he was a great C.O.) and apparently the final decision was that one should go to the First Lieutenant, Lieut. Andrews and one either to the H.S.D. (Ldg. Sea Page) or the Leading Seaman of the depth charge party (Ldg. Sea John (Jock) Baillie, which seems fair to me. Anyhow, Colin lost the toss and Jock Baillie got the medal.

What amazes me is that it was kept so quiet at the time. I have no recollection of any medals at all - but maybe it is memory playing tricks.

I hope you dont mind me writing at some length about something that happened nearly half a century ago.

For the present,
Best Wishes,
John Maddern.

NORTH RUSSIA CLUB MEMORIAL FUND

Progress is being made, but at 'straggler' pace, but we will get there in the end.

Our proposal for a plaque in St Paul's Cathedral has been discussed with the Canon in charge of the crypt in St Paul's.

Canon Routledge asked me to produce a discussion document for his committee, which has been presented, and for now we have to wait for the committee to pronounce their decision. You can be certain that we are being considered favourably.


A Boys School in Canterbury carried out exchange visits with schools in Russia. The teacher concerned is Russian by birth and shows a lot of interest in our "Living Memorial", and she has promised to help when the right time comes.

A request to our Prime Minister has been made for me to meet the Soviet President during his visit to U.K. in December, to tell him about our two memorial projects. We will give information about this in our next publication.

Les Lawrence has produced the first rough sketch of the Memorial Plaque, very nice too, but he wants to improve it, so it too will be published in the next issue.

We have received some contributions from members and promises of substantial monetary support from Lloyds Bank and one of our more wealthy members, so we are going forward.

I have a few offers of help, but I need many more especially from overseas. It is not just money, but things you can do for the project.

 Ron Wren.

A HAPPY ENDING, JUST LIKE THE FILMS WE USED TO GO TO SEE.

Remember the evacuation of civilians from the Norwegian island of Soroya? Or the sinking of S.S. Henry Bacon and rescue of survivors including a two year old girl?

If not, read page 14 of Northern Light N° 10 first!

From Len Phillips of HMS Opportune:

I would like to inform you of the up-to-date information on the subject, as you will recall the incident previously reported.

Yesterday, Friday 29th September, a newspaper representative from Oslo arrived at my home with the lady I helped to rescue all those years ago, it was a very emotional reunion, but one of the most wonderful feelings I have encountered in the whole of my life. When I last saw her she was 2 years old lying in the bottom of a lifeboat that we had located from the S.S. Henry Bacon. The boat was swamped by the exceptionally bad weather we had suffered on Convoy RA64. She was amongst 19 of the civilians in the boat, mostly old ladies and older men, there was also a lad of about 12 years, and another girl, sister of the one who visited me, who was aged 5 at the time.

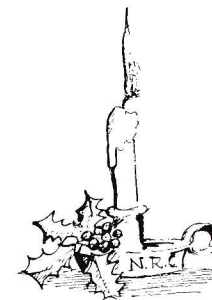
Sofie Pederson is 45/46 years old now and along with her husband, make their living from fishing. They live in a small place called Hasvik, it is a town of about 1400 people on the island of Soroya. Most islanders earn their living from the fishing industry that has been developed there. The island is now being developed as a tourist centre with many sporting facilities to be enjoyed.

The people who came with Sofie Pederson were, an interpreter who has helped me over the years, Mrs. Solveig Dahl, and the Assistant Editor of the Newspaper V.G. of Oslo. The Daily Mirror have also visited me as they were the first to publish my requests for help in my search. The Oslo newspaper are insisting that they do not publish the story before them as it has cost them so much money to bring Sofie from the very far North of Norway.

The lady on her arrival at my home was quite overcome with emotion, I didn't feel too good myself, but it was a marvellous experience as you can well imagine.

I have since been to London and we were able to attend a church service at St Pauls Cathedral.

As one gentleman said, the story is one of compassion which makes a change to the usual rape, mugging and drug taking slogs we read about today.



NEWSLETTER

As 1988 draws to a close and a new year appears on the horizon we can look back on a very successful year for the club. The highlight, of course, was the visit to Murmansk, last May, by 122 members and wives. Our various reunions and get-togethers have also continued to be well supported. Thanks to the generosity of those who have been able to attend and who supported the raffles, we are pleased to say that these events did not drain the club funds - all broke even or made a profit. Many of you cannot attend these events but we know from your letters and phone calls, that this magazine keeps you involved and we are sure that you will continue to have a postal delivery four or five times a year. Our postal costs are massive - the editor's bill alone approaches £1000 a year now. We appeal to your generosity when next you send your subscriptions.

However, the real success of the club is measured by the continued increase in membership. Elsewhere in the publication you will find a list of new members who we 'Welcome Aboard' and trust that they too, will find enjoyment, pride and satisfaction in being a member. Also, there are numerous amendments and additions to your membership list. A few are 'clangers' by Chris, some are 'slips of the pen' by Les, some are 'cock ups' by Dick, others are straightforward changes of address by members, and of course, there is the draft of new entries.

The committee are looking ahead, as the future holds some very significant dates which we intend to celebrate. The 50th Anniversary of Outbreak of War in 1989, the 45th Anniversary of VE Day in 1990 and the 50th Anniversary of the first Russian Convoy in 1991. We have catered for 1989 in the following programme, but if any of you have ideas about 1990 or 1991, please let Chris know about them.

Our membership total at going to press is 742

Now, get your new diaries out and fill in these dates:-

- SATURDAY 25TH FEBRUARY. Members Reunion Buffet Evening at Victory Services Club, Marble Arch, London at 1800 hrs. (Booking Form enclosed)
- SATURDAY 22ND APRIL. London & Home Counties Members and Ladies Dinner Dance at Kent Boat & Ski Club, Cuxton, near Rochester, Kent.
- THURSDAY 4th MAY TO SATURDAY 13TH MAY. Pilgrimage to Murmansk, with three days in Moscow and Leningrad. The tour includes Victory Day in Murmansk and bookings are approaching the limit of 120 - so hurry up and contact Dick.
- FRIDAY 28TH JULY. Royal Tournament at Earls Court. We are making a Block Booking for the Evening Performance. Further details in next newsletter.
- SATURDAY 29TH JULY. Annual General Meeting Followed by Ladies Night at Victory Services Club, Marble Arch, London.
- SATURDAY 2ND AND SUNDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER. 50th Anniversary of Outbreak of War, Thanksgiving Week-end. On Saturday afternoon a Wreath Laying Ceremony at The Russian Memorial in Brookwood Military Cemetery, followed, in the evening by a Special 1939-45 style Social and 'Knees--up' at the Victory Services Club. On Sunday, a Thanksgiving Church Service onboard HMS BELFAST by kind permission of Captain F.A. Collins, RN.
- SATURDAY 21ST OCTOBER. 5th Annual Dinner Dance and Trafalgar Day Celebration at Swallow Hotel, South Normanton, Derbyshire.
- THURSDAY 9TH NOVEMBER. Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey, Poppy Laying Ceremony on our own 'Russian Campaign Veterans' plot by kind permission of the Royal British Legion.
- SUNDAY 12TH NOVEMBER. Cenotaph March Past. N.R.C. will be taking part in the March Past - volunteers required.
- SATURDAY 25th NOVEMBER. 5th Annual Formation Buffet Evening at Victory Services Club, Marble Arch, London.

PLEASE DO NOT MAKE APPLICATIONS FOR ABOVE (except tour) UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THE OFFICIAL BOOKING FORMS.

Volunteers to run local or regional reunions should contact Chris.

SOVIET COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS We must inform those members who made an application through the club questionnaire prior to 31st March 1988, that your applications were made to the Soviet Embassy several months ago. The applications were then forwarded to Moscow for final approval - we still live in hope that the applications will be successful. We must regretfully inform other members who have not yet applied, that the Embassy will not accept further applications. The 40th Anniversary of Victory, for which the medal was struck, being long past. Throughout the U.K., the Commonwealth and the United States, a total of 8,000 medals were presented.

"PILGRIMAGE" VIDEO FILMS This is now two complete, three hour films and also one hour plus film of the Saaomi Ensemble Concert. Harold Hewitt has spent countless hours, editing and preparing commentaries, etc. He wishes to thank you for your patience and understanding. Distribution and supply arrangements are now as follows:- The first three hour film is almost ready for dispatch, when cheques already received will be banked. The second film, when complete, will be available at £20 and the Concert film at £10. The price includes postage and packing. Chris, having visited Harold on two occasions regarding the films, is sure that there is no profit margin in the above costs - in fact he is concerned that Harold may be out of pocket on the venture. Certainly, we all owe Harold our sincere gratitude. Thanks Harold, from all of us.

CHRIS'S BOOK The book about 'All of us' is under way again, and it is 'Full Ahead' on both engines, with a definite course and launching schedule. Since handing over some of the secretarial duties, particularly the membership lists to Les Sullivan, and overcoming several personal difficulties, which included two 'dry dockings' for operations on both my Port and Starboard Optics, I can now take the helm again as author. To all my many researchers I say thank you for your contributions and your patience. The book could not be published without your many fantastic reports and eye witness accounts. The publisher has accepted my suggested title change to "THE REAL COLD WAR", the original title "JACK IN JOE'S LAND" becomes the title of a chapter in the book. The publisher also intends the launch to coincide with one of the forthcoming anniversaries previously mentioned in the newsletter. I also understand that it may 'Tye In' with other special celebrations that Dick is investigating.

4TH ANNUAL DINNER DANCE During the dinner an emotive unveiling ceremony was carried out by Chairman Dennis Whitehouse, this was a coincidental link with the wreath laying ceremony which took place in the Kola Inlet last May. A full report is given in this edition of Northern Light under the heading 'The Ship of Pleasant Surprises'.

RUSSIAN CONVOY BOOKS Dick says sorry for the delay in the despatch of these books to all who ordered them. The order was placed - then, long delays as he had caught the supplier with 'His bell-bottoms at half mast' - then a consignment arrives, 60 copies of 'Tanks of the British Army' - next a further consignment arrives at the treasurer's home - no one in, books returned to carrier's depot in Oxford - Telecom profits soar with phone calls between Liverpool, Oxford and Poole - books cant be transferred between Oxford and Liverpool, but separate consignment despatched from Poole to Liverpool - they arrive and are mailed to members. But, Dick meantime has placed a further order with immediate delivery promised - they arrive in twenty seven days - he has decided that in future, he will only sell 'Comic Cuts' - or 'Tanks of the British Army' - he still has 60 copies just inside the front door!!!

AMENDMENTS TO MEMBERSHIP LIST

ADD:- ADAMS T.W. 23 Derwent Road, Melos, Wirral, Merseyside.
 ANNAND J. 1319N, Havenhurst Drive 3, West Holywood, Cal 90046 USA.
 BATEMAN Sydney 70 Nickleby House, All Saints Road, Portsmouth, Hants.
 BRITTEN N. Mayfield, Darky Lane, Ulwell, Swanage, Dorset.
 COBBE D. Little Brays, Harlow, Essex.
 CRITCHLEY Colin 32 Bosworth Road, Easwood, Leigh on Sea, Essex.
 DAVEY Kenneth W. 2 Winterslow Road, Trowbridge, Wilts.
 DUNMORE W.E. Flat 3, Trinity Court, 45 Sydenham Park, London SE26.
 DUQUEMIN R.G. Tucumcari, Clos du Soliel, Rue Des Marais,
 St Peter Port, Guernsey, C.I.
 ELLIS R.J.G. 195 Lovedean Lane, Lovedean, Hants.
 GUEST Leslie 2 Seddon Close, Atherton, Manchester M29 0JL.
 LIVETT Douglas B. 3 St Leonards Road, Deal, Kent CT14 9AD.
 McPHERSON James R. 133 Washington Street, Lynn, Mass 01902, USA.
 MANSON A.S. Post Office, John O' Groats, Wick, Caithness, Scotland.
 MARRIOTT J.R. Northcote, 36 Northend, Highham Ferrers, Northants.
 PARKER R. 3 Pine Walk, Uckfield, East Sussex.
 PEWTER F.S. Lindisfarne, 43 East Street, Tollesbury, Essex.
 ROBERTS William 153 Argyle Street, St Helens, Merseyside.
 SELLS E.J. 33 Downham Road, Ely, Cambs.
 SHELDON Harry Etruscan House, Main Road, Betley, near Crewe, Cheshire.
 SMITH John Voehead, Bressay, Shetland, Scotland.
 SMITH W. 17 Lancaster Cres., Tickhill, Doncaster, S.Yorks.
 SMITH Walter G. 4 Dundold Road, Bristol BS6 7LW.
 STACEY A.G. 55 Queens Crescent, Horndean, Portsmouth.
 UREN Richard J. 12 Whitgift Close, Laceby, near Grimsby, Humberside.
 WHEELER Morley F. 98 Letchworth Road, Western Park, Leicester.
 WOODROW F. 23 Greenview Crescent, Hildenborough, Kent.
 YATES A. The Haven, 21 Cooper Road, Ashurst, Southampton, Hants.

AMEND:- BOGLE Andrew should read BOYLE Andrew.
 ELLES Cyril address is Bencurtis Park, not Bencurtin Park.
 FRENCH Joseph address - insert Brightlingsea after Tower Street.
 DAVIES D.T.E. initials are D.T.M.
 HICKMAN Douglas. address is Great Wyrley not Great Wryley.
 JOHNSON Peter address - delete Zona Boverals 76F insert Apartado 415.
 MADDERN John address is Essex not Warks.
 MITCHENHALL Stanley should read MITCHENALL.
 WHYTE Weic should read WHYTE Eric.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

BRAMHALL Norman 2a Haig Avenue, Southport, Merseyside PR8 6LD
 BRIGGS Stanley 388 Laceby Road, Gimsby, S.Humberside.
 BURFIELD Richard 2 Archery Court, Willoughby Cresent, Eastbourne, Sussex.
 LEONARD Harry 17 Falklands Rise, Minehead, Somerset.
 MOORE Thomas 2/3 East Street, Ramsey, Isle of Man.
 PHILLIPS Leonard 8 Redgate, The Pippins, Northwich, Cheshire.
 SAINSBURY Stanley 54 Greystone Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex.
 PROUT Alfred 9 Intrepid Court, The Yachting Village, Yancheop,
 Western Australia, 6037.

Delete: "CROSSED THE BAR"

WALLIS F. 21 Arbour Road, Croft, Leicester.
 WEEKS A.J. 3 St Davids Road, Ramsgate, Kent.
 WICKENS W.E. 93 The Mount, Ringwood, Hants.

SHIPMATES LIST

ADD:- NAVAL PARTY 200: S.H. Sainsbury, D.Cobbe. R.A.F.: W.Peake.
 ALYNBANK: L. Wilson, John Smith. BELFAST: A.Yates.
 BELLONA: J.R. Marriott. CAMPANIA: R.Phelps.
 CHASER: T. Jarvis. CUMBERLAND: S. Mitchenall.
 DEVONSHIRE: R.J.G. Ellis. EDINBURGH: H. Ingle.
 FORT POPULAR: W.C. Smith. GHARINDA: L. Frere.
 HOWE: R.G. Duquemin. JAMAICA: R.J.G. Ellis.
 KENT: F.Parker. KENYA: C. Webb (delete K.Webb)
 KEPPEL: E. Mynett, R.W. Evans. MAGPIE: W.Smith.
 MATCHLESS: A.S. Manson. MERMAID: R.Duquemin,D.Hickman,W.White.
 MOUNSEY: H.W.P.M. Coles. MUSKETEER: E.J.Sells.
 MYNGS: S. Bateman. NAIRANA: S. Conley.
 ONSLOW: W. Roberts, V.Morris, R.J. Uren. SCORPLION: W.Burke.
 SAVAGE: F. Plenty, E.J. Sells. SHROPSHIRE: F. Woodrow.
 SHEFFIELD: F. Plenty, H. Sheldon. SIOUX: J.R. McPherson.
 SPEEDWELL: W. Dunmore. SUFFOLK: C.G. Critchley.
 TRACKER: W. Peake, M.F. Wheeler, L. Guest. TRINIDAD: W. Wood.
 ULSTER QUEEN: W.J. Morris. VALIANT: T.W. Adams.
 WASTWATER: F.S. Pewter. WOODCOCK: H.C. Clibbens.
 TRUMPETER: W. Peake. DUKE OF YORK: C.M. Williams.

DELETE:- PALADIN: F. Plenty. SIKH: E.J. Weeks. TRACKER: W.E. Wickens.

AMAND:- DENBEIGH CASTLE should read DENBIGH CASTLE;
 HYDRABAD should read HYDERABAD.

THE SHIP OF PLEASANT SURPRISES

As you all know, the biggest surprise during the 1988 tour of the Soviet Union, was when Intourist's Murmansk Office chartered a passenger ship to take the tourists to a position at the opening of the Kola Inlet, where they were able to lay wreaths near the spot where H.M.S. Gossamer was sunk.

Now, by coincidence that same ship has again been the subject of a surprise for our members - it occurred during the Annual Dinner Dance at South Normanton.

Throughout the dinner, our Chairman Dennis Whitehouse, sat behind an object that was obscured and draped by a White Ensign. The time for speeches and toasts arrived. One of our guests, Chris Darge, rose to his feet and asked permission to say a few words -they were:-

"In 1937 a minesweeper was built but initially fitted out as a survey vessel. With the events of late 1939 she was refitted as a minesweeper - her original design - and she became a convoy escort. Her official date of re-commissioning was 1940 and at that time a new bell was cast for her. But sadly, never did the two meet, as the ship was lost in 1942. The years passed by and for reasons that I will not go into here, the Admiralty presented the bell to a school in Gillingham, Kent. That school is called Rainham Mark Grammar School and for 25 years has been situated less than 250 yards from the home of your Founder and Hon. Secretary, Chris Tye.

At about the time of the Pilgrimage to Russia this year, my two sons, who both attend the school came home and asked me about the bell and the name of the ship on it. After extensive research to prove the bell genuine it was my great pleasure to transport it to the Dinner Dance and to ask the chairman to unveil it and introduce it to you".

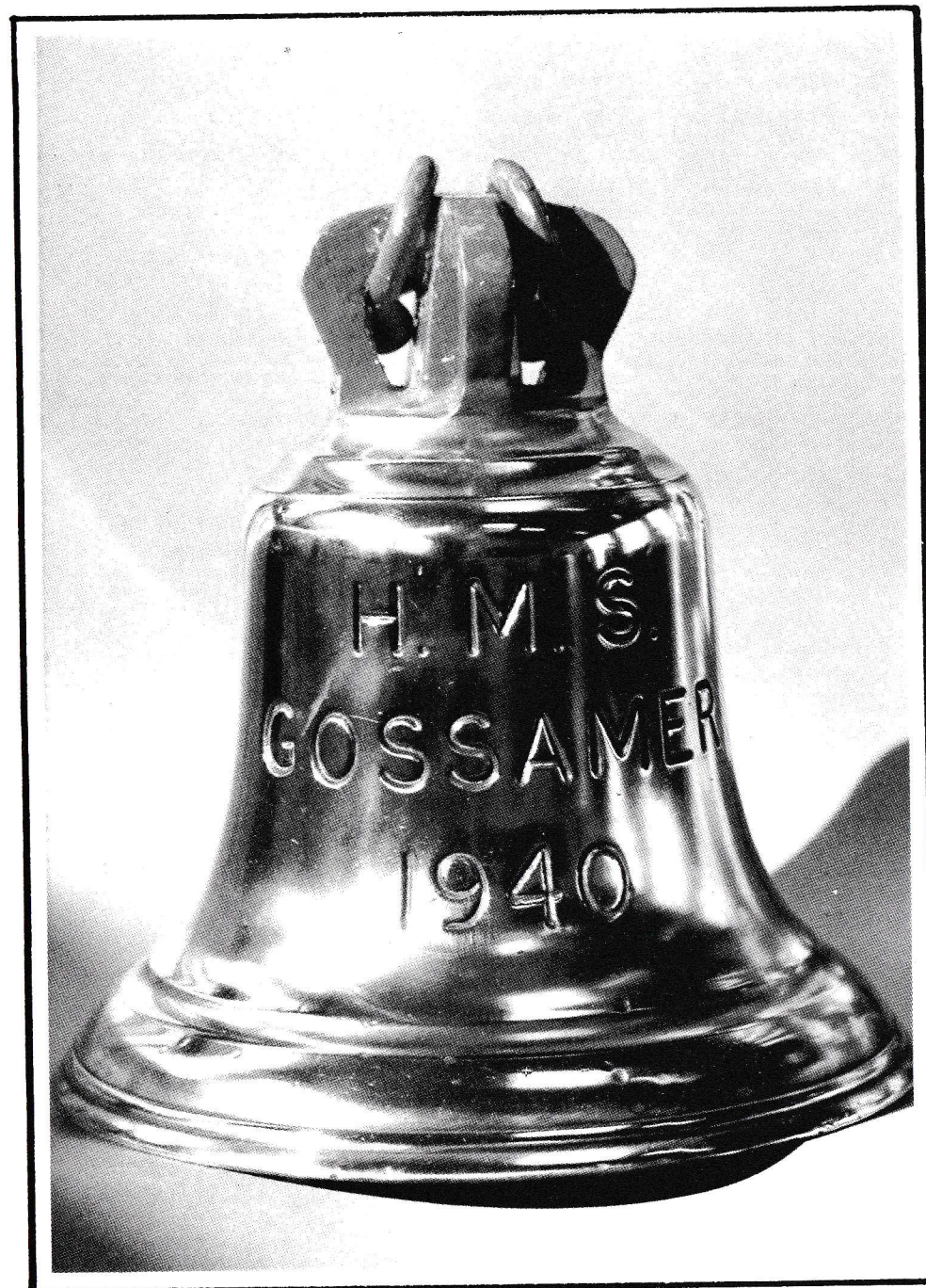
This, Dennis did, unveiling the bell with the engraving H.M.S.GOSSAMER 1940. Dennis then used it to ring in the Toast 'Absent Shipmates' and by the tone of his voice all agreed that it was a very moving moment.

Chris Darge completes the story,"The bell has waited 48 years for her ship to come home, but at least tonight, she is in correct company. The headmaster of R.M.G.S., Dr. Robin Keen wishes me to extend his best wishes to all members of N.R.C., particularly those who are ex-Gossamer. At any time, arrangements can be made to view the bell at the school, and he hopes that you all agree that the young people of the school are worthy custodians, and you can be assured that they are very proud of their charge and will take great care of it"

Chris has photographs of the bell if any member wants one (Tel (0634) 576205. He is also interested in the whereabouts of other ships bells.

P H O T O G R A P H S

CHRIS DARGE STILL HAS SOME PHOTOGRAPHS WHICH WERE TAKEN AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY MEDAL CEREMONIES, AND AT VARIOUS REUNIONS. HE ALSO HAS A FEW TAKEN AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
ALL ENQUIRIES DIRECT TO HIM ON 0634 576205



LAUGHS OF THE MONTH.

A stormy night on the bridge, with the sea shipping 'em green and everyone, from the Officer of the Watch to the bridge messenger, wishing they hadn't joined.

Look-out: (reporting a light seen with great difficulty through the gloom of an Arctic night): "A vessel on the starboard beam, Sir".

Bad tempered O.O.W.: "How do you know it's a ship?"

Look-out (fed up): "Too bloody close to be a reindeer and troika, Sir."



A true story from Noel Smith:

"I was working on the upper deck of HMS Musketeer, tied up to a bouy with another destroyer alongside, at Scapa. I walked to the guard rails and glancing down between the two destroyers and saw a cat which had obviously fallen off the other 'boat'. Always being a sucker for cats I climbed over the guard rails and down on to a fender. But I found that I was still too high to reach the desperate animal who was trying to get a grip on the steel plates. Not to be frustrated I braced my back against one boat and my knees against the other and inched my way down until I was within reach. The cat immediately shot up my arm, on to my shoulders, then to the fender and triumphantly on to the deck.

"Looking down at me in my precarious position, I'm sure I heard that moggy say, "*+\$/""** you Jack, I'm alright, I'm inboard""

(Sorry about spelling 'buoy' wrongly, - never tied up at one long enough to learn correct spelling')

Lulu says:

"A birthday is when a girl wants her past forgotten.... and her present remembered"

"Statistics say that married men live longer than bachelors....they have to, to pay off all the debts"

"A genius is a bloke who remembers all the faces"

"All men are beasts....can I help it if I am an animal lover"

"Give a girl an inch....and she will make a bikini of it"

"It's easy being faithful to a husband....if he is somebody else's man"

"My second marriage was a triumph of hope over experience"

"It's a hard life when the doctor says you must cut down on your sex life....and you haven't got one"

"No matter how big a boy gets for his britches....some girl will bring him down to sighs"

"And remember....I can resist everything....except temptation"



LULU IS CRACKERS
ABOUT N.R.C.



HMS EDINBURGH
BFPO Ships

FAIR COPY OF THE REPORT ON THE LOSS OF HMS EDINBURGH ON SATURDAY 2 MAY 1942.

BY CAPTAIN H FAULKNER ROYAL NAVY

Sir,

1. I have the honour to submit the following report on the loss of HMS EDINBURGH under my command on Saturday 2 May 1942.

2. On receiving the first damage by two torpedoes at 1613B on 30 April 1942, I was proceeding in accordance with your verbal instructions in position 73° 08'N 33°E ahead of convoy QP11 on a Mean course of 205 at a speed of 19 knots and carrying out zig-zag No 34. The convoy was steering 295 and EDINBURGH had previously been steering 315 to keep clear of submarines which D/F bearings indicated might be in the convoy's line of advance. At 1606B course was altered to 205 to cross the convoy's track, before turning to remake contact on the course of 115.

3. At 1607 course was altered 20 degrees to starboard to carry out the first leg of the zig-zag. The ship had steadied on the new course when she was struck by one torpedo between Station No 70 and 87. Within two seconds a second torpedo struck her between stations 248 and 260.

4. The ship continued to steam circling to starboard to 020 and I tried to establish communication with the Lower Steering position, or Damage Control Headquarters, but could get no reply. No communication could be obtained with either the After Damage Control Party in "Y" Cabin Flat or the Engine Room and the ship took on a list of about 7 degrees. I had all damage control parties piped to close up and ordered the torpedoes on the starboard side to be fired to reduce the list.

5. Communication was soon established by telephone to the Type 279 RDF Office, CCO and Engine Room and a report was received stating that steam pressure was maintained and that all four shafts were rotating. Shortly afterwards I received a report that the stern abaft "Y" turret was demolished except for some wreckage, it broke off finally two hours later at about 1830 from abaft the armoured bulkhead No 238 carrying with it the port inner "A" bracket and propeller.

6. I realised that the rudder had gone and that the port inner shaft could not be expected to remain serviceable for long.

7. I then tried to bring the ship to an Easterly course by varying the revolutions on the remaining two shafts; this was found to be impractical, and as it was possible that further attack could be expected and since no escort was available I continued steaming in a North North Easterly course at about 10 knots, which was the highest speed obtainable without risk of further damage.

8. A full report of the damage contained and the action taken is contained in Enclosure 1.

9. Immediately the ship had been struck, CS18 ordered a signal to be made to BULLDOG and at 1730B FORESTER arrived to screen me, followed by FORESIGHT at 1800B and the two Russian destroyers at 1832B. FORESTER proceeded to investigate a S/M sighted to the North Eastward returning at 1920B.

10. Preparations were made for a destroyer to tow ahead to assist in steering the ship and at 1950B EDINBURGH was taken in tow by FORESTER. Unfortunately, the ship, which was now 7ft down by the bow and had no stern and probably two damaged shafts hanging well below her bottom, came rapidly up into the wind immediately she gathered headway.

11. After parting the tow, the attempt to tow from forward was abandoned and preparations were made to take a destroyer on aft.

12. Before this could be done, however, FORESTER sighted a submarine on the surface about 4 miles distant and made off to attack.

13. In the meantime a report of the damage had been received, flooding boundaries established, and the list had been taken off the ship; the Engineer Officer informed me that 120 revolutions per minute on the two outer shafts could be maintained without risk of further damage. This report was confirmed by the Executive Officer, and Shipwright Officer.

14. When the FORESTER returned, FORESIGHT was taken in tow aft and an attempt was made to maintain a course towards Kola Inlet, using the towed ship to control the steering.

15. This method proved reasonably efficient and a speed of advance of about 3 knots was attained between 2330B/30 and 0600B/1.

16. The ship was then estimated to be 240 miles from Kola Inlet and, as a report had been received from SBNO North Russia that a tug and further escort of minesweepers were being sent out, there appeared every hope that the ship might be brought back to harbour, though it was realised that, as this would take four days, I would have to be prepared for increasing attack from submarines, aircraft and light forces.

17. At 1600 Russian destroyers, who had been making signals about their fuel shortage for some hours, reported that they must now return to harbour owing to shortage of fuel and as it was considered essential that at least two destroyers should be used for screening the ship, the tow was cast off and an attempt was made to steer the ship by use of main engines only.

18. The wind being from NNW it was found that she could only be pointed to her course by gathering slight sternway. When her head was pointing about 110 degrees, and swinging to Starboard, headway was gathered and the swing maintained as far as possible by control of the engines. After passing through 140 degrees the swing was stopped at about 200 degrees and the ship swung rapidly back to 110 degrees. In spite of every effort to reduce this swing to port it could not be done without gathering slight sternway. After letting her head pass through 110 sternway was again gathered and the process repeated.

19. By tacking in this manner a speed of advance of about 2 knots was obtained in spite of having to gather sternway about every 5 to 10 minutes. This tortuous track could be seen winding astern, indicated by the oil, and occasionally the ship got completely out of control and swept round in a complete circle. The engine room register shows that in one watch 64 orders were executed on one shaft alone.

20. This progress was maintained for about 23 hours and although it was a considerable strain on all concerned, the ship did advance in the right direction.

21. Submarines were continually in the vicinity as homing signals were received, and there was no doubt that EDINBURGH's movements were being reported.

22. Attempts were made by FORESIGHT and FORESTER to drive off submarines and their efficient screening and general alertness during this trying time undoubtedly saved EDINBURGH from further attack, as the ship was an almost stationary target.

23. Reports received from SBNO of D/F fixes indicated that many submarines were taking up their positions between EDINBURGH and Kola Inlet, and reports from BULLDOG indicated that enemy destroyers were at sea and might reach us any time after midnight.

24. The hands were kept at Action Stations, but the extreme cold (17°F) and lack of electrical heating, made the duties of all men in exposed positions extremely arduous, especially as the destruction of the mess-decks forward had deprived a number of them of warm clothing.

25. Before the Russian destroyers left me I took the opportunity of mustering a representative proportion of the ship's company on the flight deck and informing them of the situation.

26. I told them that I had high hopes of getting the ship back to harbour, and the way they responded to these remarks convinced me that my hopes were shared by them all, that morale was high and that there was no indication of our danger in the behaviour, conversation or other actions of any officer or man with whom I came in contact.

27. In fact we soon began to re-establish communications, restore amenities, such as cooking facilities and SRE gear, which made life seem almost normal.

28. At 1800/1 a vessel was sighted bearing approximately 210 and at first this was thought to be a German destroyer. The armament was trained onto the target, but at the same time the vessel made an identification signal and gave her name as the Russian gunboat RUBIN.

29. HUSSAR, in company with a tug, joined at 2345/1 followed by HARRIER, GOSSAMER and NIGER. The tug was taken on ahead but was not sufficiently powerful to keep the ship from coming into the wind. A further attempt was made towing the tug astern, but this was again found to be impracticable.

30. The possibility of towing or steaming the ships stern first was again considered but the Warrant Shipwright informed me that the movement of the after bulkhead every time the ship had gained any sternway indicated that such action would be attended with grave risk and could not be entertained.

31. At 0530 the tug was again taken on ahead and GOSSAMER astern to act as a drogue. The ship was hauled round till her head was pointing in the desired direction and then went slowly ahead on both engines.

32. She was proceeding on a course of 150 with a speed of about 3 knots with the tug fine on the Starboard bow and GOSSAMER broad on the Port Quarter. There seemed every hope that by this means the desired course could be made good, but the arrival of the German destroyers made it necessary to slip the tow before sufficient advance had been made to prove this conclusively. Although I very much doubt if a speed of more than 3 knots could have been obtained which would have meant a further 3 or 4 days at sea with attendant difficulties of fuel requirements of tug and escort.

33. At 0600 gunfire from HARRIER on the Starboard quarter indicated the arrival of enemy vessels which proved to be three German destroyers. The tows were slipped and EDINBURGH proceeded at her maximum speed of about eight knots. As from previous experience it was realized that it was hopeless to try and steer the ship except by gathering sternway, no attempt was made to steer by main engines. The ship circled round to Port sometimes rapidly and sometimes on a wider curve.

34. By this time FORESTER and FORESIGHT had moved out to engage the enemy destroyers and EDINBURGH concentrated all her efforts on assisting them as much as she could.

35. The visibility was very bad and only one enemy destroyer was visible at any one time. The remainder being hidden by smoke or snow flurries, and it was always difficult to distinguish our own from enemy vessels.

36. As the ship was continually altering course and all turrets were in local control, it was only with great difficulty that the armament could be kept on the target and, in addition, to safeguard FORESIGHT and FORESTER, it was essential to withhold fire until the target could be clearly identified.

37. The Gunnery Officer was in control of "X" Turret, and the foremost group controlled by a Lieutenant in "B" Turret. "B" Turret was coned onto the target by the bridge and by this means did some very effective firing at the destroyers which attempted to close EDINBURGH. On three occasions determined attempts were driven off before torpedoes were fired but on the fourth occasion the enemy was in sight for such a brief period that torpedoes must have been fired as soon as the ship was sighted.

38. "A" Turret could not pick up the target and did not open fire. Nearly all salvoes from "B" Turret seemed to fall in line and on two occasions hits were reported.

39. At 0652 torpedoes were seen breaking surface about 5000 yards on the Starboard beam and it seemed certain that they would pass well astern.

40. The ship's head, however, was swinging very slowly to Port and the tracks were lost sight of. The ship started to swing rapidly to Port and the tracks were again sighted on the Port side and it was thought that they would pass astern, which, in fact, two of them did. However, one torpedo, running deep, was seen close to the ship and it was realized that no action could be taken to avoid it. Another track was seen to pass close ahead.

41. One torpedo struck the ship between frames numbers 87 and 108 and she listed rapidly to Port to an angle of 12 degrees and continued slowly to increase the list. The Engineer Officer reported that steam was failing.

42. I received a report, whose origin I have not been able to trace, that "A" Boiler Room was flooding and I ordered the Engineer Officer to stop Main Engines and to get the Engine Room and Boiler Room personnel on deck.

43. "B" Turret was still engaging the enemy when in accordance with

your orders GOSSAMER came alongside Starboard side and HARRIER Port side.

44. The list had by this time increased to 17 degrees and orders were passed to transfer all sick and wounded to minesweepers and men not required to man the armament to embark.

45. At this time FORESIGHT was seen to have been hit and stopped although still in action with the enemy. FORESTER was not in sight. HUSSAR laid a smoke screen to cover EDINBURGH.

46. The list prevented EDINBURGH making use of her armament at close quarters on the engaged side. I ordered "A" and "B" Turrets' crews to leave their turrets and the ship to be completely abandoned, in accordance with your verbal orders.

47. When I had been informed by the Master-at-Arms and Executive Officer that all men were up from below, that all upper deck hatches that could be reached had been opened, I then left the ship myself and boarded HARRIER. In accordance with your orders, HARRIER lay off to wait for the ship to sink.

48. The wind having gone down and there being no sea, the list only increased very slowly and as the action with the destroyers was still in progress, attempts were made to hasten the end by firing a few 4" shells from HARRIER and dropping depth charges close alongside. This proved unsuccessful and FORESIGHT who had one torpedo remaining and was now again under way was ordered to sink her.

49. On being hit by FORESIGHT's torpedo the ship immediately started to turn over and within 3 minutes was completely submerged.

50. I have no doubt from seeing the effect of the final torpedo, that the ship had previously been in a very bad state; had another torpedo hit her before the ship's company was taken off, only a very small proportion would have been saved; the temperature of the water being so low that no men could have lived if not picked up within a few minutes, and even those who could have been saved would probably have been maimed by frostbite as they would not have been given proper attention in the limited space available in the minesweepers.

51. HARRIER and GOSSAMER then proceeded to Murmansk at their best available speed and during our time onboard we were shown every consideration and given every comfort available. All officers turned out of their cabins to provide accommodation and the captains' cabins were given over to the sick and wounded.

52. On arrival at Polyarnoe all men were mustered by the open list on the jetty and the total number of casualties established. After I had addressed them they were split up into groups as required by local accommodation. One third of them remained at Polyarnoe and the rest re-embarked in GOSSAMER for transport to Vaenga, the sick and wounded being sent to Murmansk.

53. The ship's log and ledger were saved. Confidential Books and Charge Documents, which were in a locked stowage were not transferred to HARRIER as it was considered better for security reasons that they should be sunk with the ship. HARRIER herself was in the presence of the enemy, was most unlikely to have a suitable stowage onboard and, above all, the time and the risk of transfer could not be accepted.

54. The only other stores saved were two pairs of binoculars from the Captain's sights which were removed by the bridge personnel before they

left the ship, have been transferred to HARRIER who has taken them on voluntary charge.

55. The ship's company's behaviour during these three trying days left nothing to be desired and although they had to work continually in severe cold with makeshift meals and almost continually at Action Stations when not repairing damage or handling tows, all orders were carried out cheerfully and enthusiastically. All emergencies were met with such confidence and calmness that they ceased to be emergencies.

56. The work of the Damage Control Parties under Commander Jefferis, Sub Lieutenant (E) Cox and Mr Dudding calls for special commendation, the careful planning of the damage control organisation with the many weeks of training proved its worth on this occasion as never before. In fact both hits had actually been exercised before and although the damage visualised was almost correct in the case of the forward torpedo, the complete collapse of the stern had not been foreseen. In the drawing up of the DC organisation and planning the training I was fortunate in having Construction Commander Skinner onboard whose help and advice proved invaluable.

57. Throughout the whole three days, the work of all men below decks and in particular the Engine Room Department was beyond praise and their behaviour and bearing were in the highest traditions of the Service. At no time was there any panic or selfish thought. Every man worked for the good of his messmates and the ship. Commander (E) Dathon was always intent on keeping the ship steaming and the great work of the engine room department was largely due to his leadership and determination. Total casualties were 2 officers and 58 ratings killed, one officer and 24 ratings wounded.

58. Surgeon Commander Lacelles and his staff who had been working almost unceasingly in attending to the many sick and wounded which we carried continued to the end calmly and methodically doing everything that was necessary for the casualties and the efficient evacuation of the disabled reflects the greatest credit on him.

59. An efficient well trained ships company have been saved for further service. I think that we have all been hardened by our experience. It is our one desire that we may be kept together to man another ship as soon as possible and see another convoy through.

60. The way the ship stood up to her punishment has restored the confidence of all officers and men in our ships.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Serviant,

H FAULKNER
Captain Royal Navy
Commanding Officer.

Copy supplied by 'Happy' Harry Ingle.

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES IN THE SOVIET UNION.

During this year's tour it was suggested that there were a few R.A.F. graves at Vaenga, near Murmansk. Our enquiries at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission disclosed that the only graves, other than those in Murmansk which we have previously listed, are at Archangel and Odessa.

ARCHANGEL ALLIED CEMETERY

Index No. U.S.S.R. 1

Archangel Allied Cemetery is on the north-western outskirts of the town, adjoining the Lutheran and Russian cemeteries. It was begun by the Anglo-American-French "Allied Burial Board" formed in August 1918, and was used by various British hospitals, H.M. Hospital Ship *Kalyan*, and other allied hospitals. There are 434 Commonwealth casualties of the 1914-1918 War buried or commemorated here.

There are only three British graves of the 1939-1945 War. In addition there are 3 non-war graves (Merchant Navy).

KIMSEY, Bdr. GEORGE ALBERT, 5118485. 3 Maritime Regt., Royal Artillery. 27th June, 1944. Age 28. Son of John Alfred and Rosina Kimsey, of Enfield, Middlesex; husband of Ada Kimsey, of Enfield.

PERT, A.B. WILLIAM, D/JX. 239272. R.N. H.M.S. *President III*. 28th May, 1943. Age 26. Son of George and Mary Helen Pert, of Montrose, Angus.

WATSON, Cpl. CYRIL, S/2148611. R.A.S.C. 23rd June, 1943. Age 33. Son of James and Alice Watson, of Manchester.

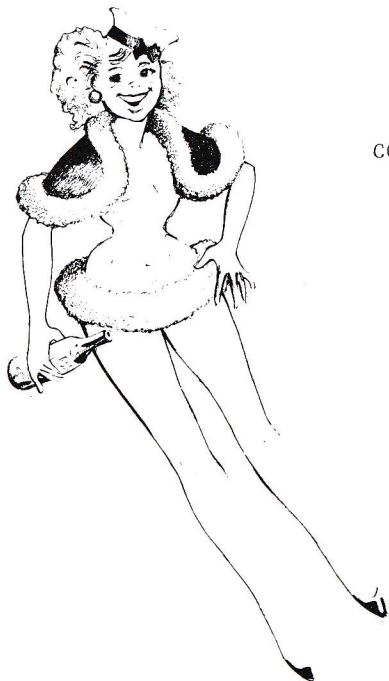
ODESSA 2nd CHRISTIAN CEMETERY

Index No. U.S.S.R. 3

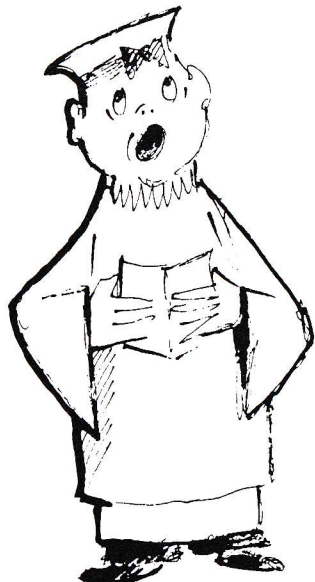
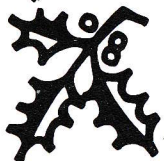
Odessa, in the Ukraine, is the largest seaport on the Black Sea and is ice-bound for a few weeks in winter. It has a cathedral and a university. In the 2nd Christian Cemetery (the "1st Cemetery" was destroyed during the 1939-1945 War) is the grave of a British soldier.

RABEY, Pte. JOHN ALWYN, 3909314. 1st Bn. The South Wales Borderers. 24th May, 1945. Age 25. Son of David and Violet Rabey, of Morriston, Swansea. Plot 127. Row 7. Grave 7.

The Commission also informed us that the names of all Commonwealth casualties of World War II who are interred in the Soviet Union are recorded and commemorated on a plinth in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey.



COMPLIMENTS
OF THE
SEASON
TO ALL
OUR
READERS



NORTH RUSSIA CLUB
THANKSGIVING CHURCH SERVICE
ONBOARD H.M.S. BELFAST
SUNDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 1989
(50th Anniversary of Outbreak of War)