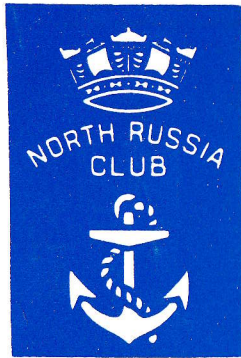


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6/92



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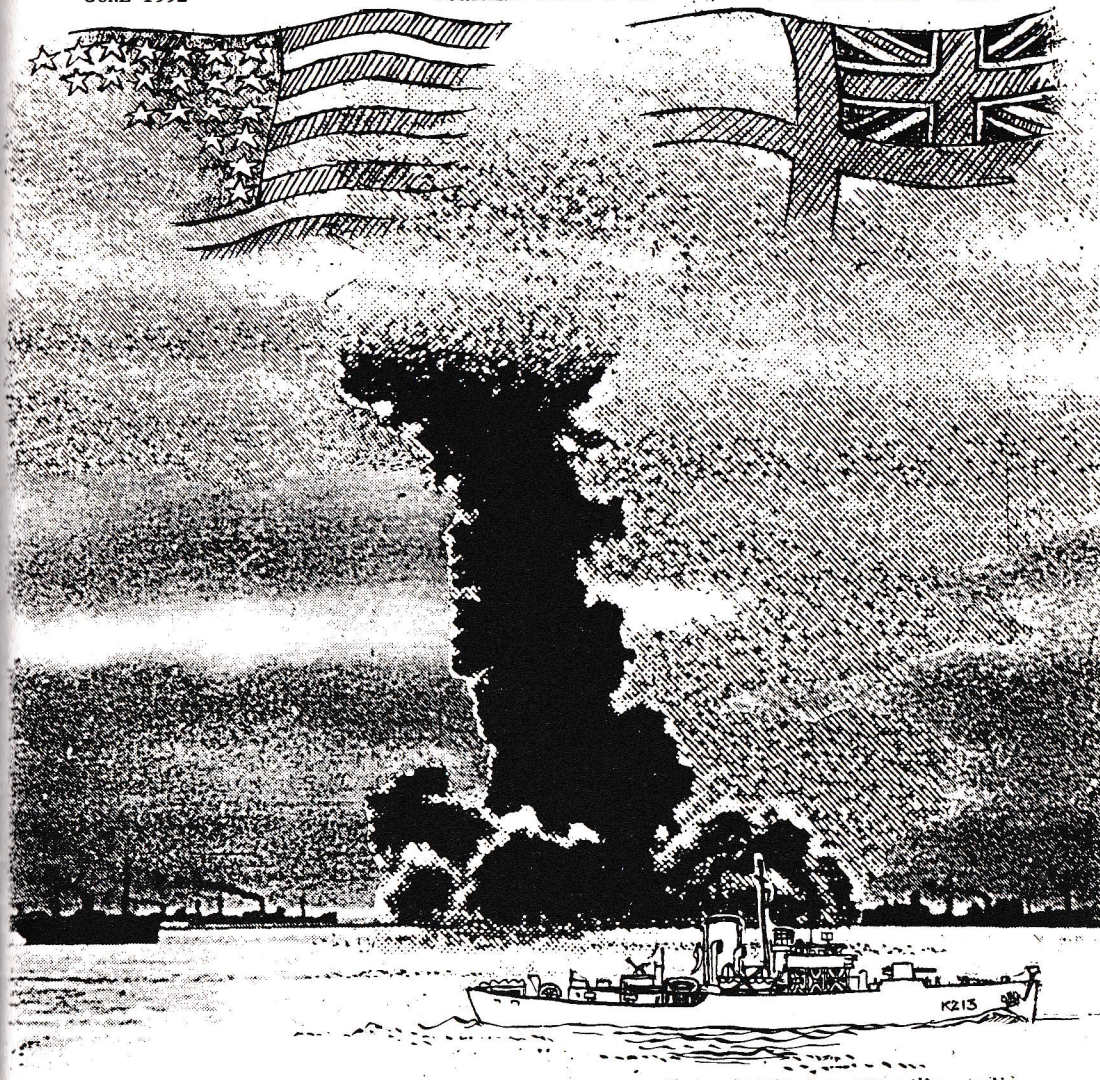
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH RUSSIA CLUB

6/92

JUNE 1992

NORTHERN LIGHT N°28

ISSN 0958 - 1014



1942

JULY TO DECEMBER

EDITORIAL

As editor I must record special thanks to all contributors of this special "PQ17 Edition" of Northern Light. Particularly I say Thank You to Denis Brooke our artist, who has created a very interesting Page One picture to commemorate the most tragic of all WWII convoys. The funereal pall of black smoke is of course from the famous PQ17 photograph of the burning of the Russian tanker AZERBAIJAN, suitable we think to mark the tragedy of the convoy. (Denis has done quite a complicated montage to get the smoke the right size and the merchant ships into the picture!) HMS POPPY has been introduced to represent the many Arctic corvettes and small escorts and she is placed leaving the picture to symbolise the "Scatter". The 'Stars and Stripes' remind us of the fourth of July.

We have had an extra good response, both from regular contributors, new members and also non-members. This has produced an extra large edition and will probably leave our treasurer with raised eye-brows. We have been fortunate in obtaining the Naval Staff History of the convoy and it is published in full. Although this can be a little heavy reading it will certainly open your eyes to the views and decisions of the top brass. It also shows how they got 'their wires crossed' on several occasions. But I am sure you will enjoy most, if not all, of the personal accounts of those terrible days.

Although there are more than 30 pages of PQ17 stories, we have not sacrificed the other items of news that are regular features in Northern Light.

The calendar of "Arctic Campaign Events" for the second half of 1992 is published on the opposite page - this will jog your memories and perhaps bring to mind more 50th anniversary stories for the September edition - please send your story to me as early as you can. The address and phone number is:-

R.D.Squires, 28 Westbrook Road, Gateacre, Liverpool L25 2PX. Tel:051 487 9567.

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"CROSSED THE BAR"

WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE ROLL

CALL OF DEPARTED SHIPMATES

Letters of condolence have been sent and club representatives have attended funerals wherever possible.

R.LEWIS of Tamworth	ex-TRACKER
H.E.G.NARRAWAY of Merton, London	ex-BELFAST
BERNARD BASSETT of Hereford	ex-BOADICEA
W.J.SUTTON of Chessington	ex-ORIBI
REV.D.L.GRAHAM of Lockeridge	ex-TRINIDAD
D.W.E.BAKER of Chatham	ex-MUSKETEER

The death is also reported of Captain Derek Wyburd DSO, DSC, RN who was the SBNO in Archangel and Murmansk when the convoys commenced.

A SAILOR WARRIOR'S LAMENT

We've ploughed our way through stormy seas,
While oceans ebbed and flowed.
At times to pray upon our knees,
On a sometimes lonely road.
The time has come, to change our course,
For our places - up on high.
Cherubs, Seraphims, our guiding force,
Till one ourselves - with wings to fly.
No more to hear the seagulls cry,
Or follow a lonely star.
Swords are crossed and put to lie,
It's time to Cross the Bar.

Frederick H Hardy.

"ARCTIC CAMPAIGN"

50TH ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR

JULY TO DECEMBER 1992

Important dates, continued from Page 9, Edition N°27.

All PQ17 dates are included on following pages.

- July 5th HMS NIGER, SS HYBERT, SS HEFFRON, SS MASSMAR and Russian RODINA, sunk in minefield off Iceland (part of Convoy QP13).
- " 7th QP13(a) arrived Reykjavik.) 5 losses.
- " 7th QP13(b) arrived Loch Ewe.)
- Sept 2nd PQ18 sailed from Loch Ewe with 40 merchantmen.
- " 13th SS EMPIRE STEVENSON sunk by aircraft torpedo in position 76°10'N. 10°05'E
- " 13th SS EMPIRE BEAUMONT sunk by aircraft torpedo in position 76°10'N. 10°50'E.
- " 13th U589 depth charged and sunk by HMS FAULKNER.
- " 14th U88 depth charged and sunk by HMS ONSLOW.
- " 14th QP14 sailed from White Sea ports 13 merchantmen.
- " 16th U457 depth charged and sunk by HMS IMPULSIVE.
- " 17th PQ18 arrived Archangel with 13 losses.
- " 20th HMS LEDA sunk by U435 whilst escorting QP14.
- " 20th HMS SOMALI torpedoed by U703. (sunk under tow 24th September.)
- " 26th QP14 arrived Loch Ewe with 3 losses.
- " 28th U253 depth charged and sunk by Catalina escorting QP14.
- Oct 29th Independent eastward sailings (Operation "FB") commenced.
- " 31st Midget Submarines CHARLOT VI and CHARLOT VIII lost in attack on TIRPITZ.
- Nov. 2nd SS EMPIRE GILBERT sunk by U586 (Operation "FB")
- " 4th Russian DEKABRIST sunk by aircraft bombs. (Operation "FB")
- " 4th SS WILLIAM CLARK sunk by U354 (Operation "FB")
- " 5th SS CHULMLEIGH stranded on reef off Spitzbergen (Operation "FB")
- " 6th SS EMPIRE SKY sunk by U625 (Operation "FB")
- " 7th Abandoned hulk of CHULMLEIGH sunk by U625.
- " 17th QP15 sailed from Archangel with 28 merchantmen. Convoy scattered by gales
- " 22nd Soviet destroyer SOKRUSHITELNEY capsized and sank in gale.
- " 30th to 3rd Dec. QP15 arrived at Loch Ewe with 2 losses.
- Dec. 2nd Last independent sailing.
- " 15th JW51A sailed from Loch Ewe with 16 merchantmen.
- " 20th JW51B sailed from Loch Ewe with 14 merchantmen.
- " 25th JW51A part arrived Kola Inlet.
- " 27th JW51A remainder arrived Molotovsk.
- " 30th RA51 sailed from Kola Inlet with 14 merchantmen.
- " 31st HMS ACHATES and HMS BRAMBLE sunk by enemy forces in Battle of Barents Sea
German FRIEDRICH EKHOLDT sunk by British forces in Battle of Barents Sea.

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P H O T O G R A P H S

Many published photographs in this edition
are from the late Godfrey Winn Collection
loaned to Northern Light by John Beardmore,
to whom the collection was bequeathed.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Apart from the various medal presentations around the country and referred to on the previous page, several other functions have been held.

On Saturday 7th March the Southern Reunion took place at the Royal Sailors Home Club and was again well attended. Several letters have been received from members who had not previously attended a club function and the majority of these were very complimentary to the Home Club as well as to the organiser, Mervyn Williams. Any member requiring official photographs of this event can obtain them from Solent Studios, Portsmouth. We also record our thanks to all those who donated raffle prizes.

On the following Saturday 14th March several club members attended the H.M.S. Bellona Reunion at Victory Services Club, London, when a medal presentation was included in the evening's activities. The reunion was organised by Arthur Willis.

Thursday 26th March was the Big Day, when I, accompanied by Peg and my daughter Carol, attended Buckingham Palace for the Investiture as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for "Services to the North Russia Club". Her Majesty asked several questions about our activities and was keenly interested. A most wonderful day due entirely to the enthusiasm you all give me for the various jobs I do for the club.

Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March were the dates of the Northern Reunion at the Stretton Hotel, Blackpool. Attendance was a little down on last year, but an excellent dinner was followed by a very convivial evening, all organised by Les Jones. On Sunday morning a Thanksgiving Service to mark the 50th Anniversary of H.M.S. Trinidad's 'accident' when she torpedoed herself, was conducted by Canon Colin Craston, Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen and N.R.C. club member. Shipmate Colin attended despite suffering a personal family tragedy on the previous day. Thank you sincerely, Colin, on behalf of all of us. God Bless You.

On Wednesday 15th April the Annual South West Members' Dinner took place at Frome in Somerset. This annual event was again well organised by 'Curly' Morris.

On Friday 10th April, our International Reunion Secretary returned to H.M.S. London to represent the "London Ten" (those lucky chaps who sailed aboard her during the Dervish Celebrations) and to unveil a plaque which had been presented to the ship by "the ten". The plaque bears the badges of the North Russia Club and the Russian Convoy Club and has pride of place in the Wardroom Flat. In a letter to Peter, Captain Mark Stanhope O.B.E., R.N., has said "It is a constant reminder to us all on board, of the historic and immensely enjoyable period that H.M.S. London spent north of the Arctic Circle as the U.K. Flagship for Operation Dervish 1991".

Is anyone interested in a Reunion in the South Wales area? If so will they please contact our Southern 'Reunion and Social' committee representative, Mervyn Williams. His address is:-
87 Olive Road, Coxford, Southampton SO1 6FT. (Tel:0703 775875)

.....

INTERNATIONAL REUNION

SEE UPDATE on PAGE 51. THERE'S STILL TIME TO BOOK!!

FROM NAVAL STAFF HISTORY BR1736 (44) (With permission)

CONVOY PQ17

BEFORE THE "SCATTER" SIGNAL

Nearly a month elapsed between the arrivals of PQ16 and QP12 at the end of May and the sailing of the next pair of convoys. This was owing to the necessity of calling on the Home Fleet to contribute forces to an operation for the supply of Malta*, which left insufficient destroyers for running the convoys to North Russia. When these were resumed, the story of PQ17 and QP13 was one of unrelieved gloom. PQ17's losses amounted to a major disaster. Out of 33 merchant ships that cleared Iceland only 11 completed their voyage; 66 per cent succumbed to the German Air Force and submarines. QP13 was not molested by the enemy, but, as though some malign fate was brooding over these operations, lost five ships in an Allied minefield off Iceland.

The disaster of PQ17 was the subject of considerable criticism on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as by the Russians. It will therefore be convenient to take stock of the situation as it appeared to those responsible for the sailing and protection of the convoys at this date.

At the Admiralty, the problem had been continually under review. The risks were by no means underestimated; but however great, political considerations compelled their acceptance. Nor, for similar reasons, could the palliatives suggested by Sir John Tovey, viz., temporary suspension of smaller convoys be agreed to; American munitions for Russia were piling up, and Russia was clamouring for the munitions.

Hitherto, it could be claimed, the defence had on the whole kept pace with the increasing severity of the attack. There had been serious losses, but they had been confined to accepted limits. Nevertheless those best qualified by personal experience to judge viewed the prospect of continuing the traffic during the summer months with grave misgiving. It was difficult to see how the problem could be solved if the enemy chose to supplement his air and U-boat offensive by using his heavy ships for surface attack in the Barents Sea.

This was precisely what the German Naval Staff had decided to do. By the beginning of June the fuel situation (hitherto a limiting factor) had sufficiently improved to permit operating the heavy ships, a course repeatedly recommended by the Flag Officer, Northern Waters, and concurred by Admiral Schniewind, the Commander in Chief afloat, who, while unwilling to become involved with Allied heavy ships, was not happy about the effect on morale of his forces lying idle in the fiords, while the U-boats and aircraft were committed to the attack. Fortunately, the approval of Hitler himself was necessary for the employment of the heavy ships; his reluctance to expose them to risk and the restrictions imposed by him were sufficient seriously to hamper the operations.

This of course, was unknown to the British, though, as already mentioned, it was suspected - at any rate so far as TIRPITZ was concerned - by the Commander in Chief, Home Fleet. But there were indications in June that the enemy intended at last to bring out his main units to attack the next east-bound convoy to the eastward of Bear Island, and this threat formed the main preoccupation of the Admiralty at the end of that month.

The Germans, it will be remembered, had four heavy ships in Norway, the TIRPITZ and HIPPER at Trondheim and the SCHEER and LUTZOW at Narvik; the Trondheim group included four, and the Narvik group six destroyers.

continued.

* Operation 'Harpoon' The cruiser KENYA, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral Curteis, LIVERPOOL and eight destroyers left Scapa on 4th June. The LIVERPOOL and MATCHLESS were damaged and the BEDOUIN sunk in the course of the operation; the remainder rejoined the Home Fleet on 24th June.

The strategic situation, wrote Admiral Tovey in his despatch, (London Gazette 17-10-50pp5154/5)

'was wholly favourable to the enemy. His heavy ships would be operating close to their own coast, with the support of powerful shore-based air reconnaissance and striking forces, and protected, if he so desired, by a screen of U-boats in the channels between Spitzbergen and Norway. Our covering forces, on the other hand, if they entered these waters, would be without shore-based air support, one thousand miles from their base, with their destroyers too short of fuel to escort a damaged ship to harbour'

He went on to remark that apart from Allied submarine attacks off the enemy coast, a more favourable disposition could be brought about only by inducing the enemy heavy ships to come further to the westward to deliver their attacks. Accordingly, he proposed that the east bound convoy, on reaching longitude 10°E, should put back for 12 to 18 hours, unless it was known that the German ships were still in harbour or the weather prevented shadowing from the air. He hoped that 'this temporary turn back would either tempt the German heavy ships to pursue, or cause them to return to harbour' or compel them to cruise for an extended period among our submarines' - of which including Russians, a dozen were stationed between Bear Island and the coast of Norway. The admiralty did not agree with this, though their instruction in Admiralty Message O157B of 27 June 1942 stated ".....envisaged the possibility, under certain circumstances of the convoy being turned back by the Admiralty"; but not of this turn being timed to achieve the object the C-in-C had in view. The Admiralty instructions also laid down that the safety of the convoy against surface attack to the westward of Bear Island must be met by our surface forces, and to the eastward of that meridian must be met by submarines; and that the cruiser covering force was not intended to go east of Bear Island, unless the convoy was threatened by the presence of a surface force which the cruisers could fight, (i.e. a force that did not include TIRPITZ), or in any case to go beyond 25°E.

This plan did not altogether meet the Commander-in-Chief's views, which from the first appearance of the German heavy ships in Norway had differed in several respects from those of the Admiralty as to the tactical dispositions best calculated to achieve the object; but he was seriously perturbed to learn in the course of a telephone conversation with the First Sea Lord that under certain circumstances the Admiralty contemplated ordering the convoy to scatter*. All the latest experience had pointed to the vital necessity for ships to keep well closed up for mutual support against the heavy air attack that was certain, weather permitting, to take place, and he strongly deprecated such an order being given, except as a last resort in the actual presence of attack by overwhelming surface forces.

In the event the sailing of TIRPITZ and other heavy ships resulted in disaster to PQ17, though they themselves were never within 300 miles of the convoy.

The dispositions adopted were very similar to those for PQ16 and QP12. Four cruisers under Rear-Admiral L.H.K.Hamilton, LONDON (flag), NORFOLK, TUSCALOOSA and WICHITA, with the destroyers SOMALI, WAINWRIGHT and ROWAN were to provide close cover as far as Bear Island, while the Commander-in-Chief in DUKE OF YORK, with WASHINGTON (flag, Rear-Admiral Giffen), VICTORIOUS (flag, Vice-Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser), NIGERIA (flag, Rear-Admiral Burrough), CUMBERLAND and 14 destroyers provided distant cover to the north-east of Jan Mayen Island,

There was also a diversion in the shape of a pretend convoy, consisting of five ships of the 1st Minelaying Squadron and four colliers, escorted by SIRIUS, CURACOA, and some destroyers and trawlers. This force assembled at Scapa several days before the main operation was to begin, and sailed on 29th June (two days after PQ17 left Iceland). Having passed the Shetlands west-about, the force steered eastward as far as 61°30'N., 1°E., hoping to be seen and reported by enemy aircraft, after which it turned back for Scapa. The sailing of the Battle

* The telephone between the Fleet Flagship at Scapa Flow and the Admiralty was much used for the exchange of views on important questions. No verbatim records of these conversations were kept.

Fleet was arranged for the same day as this pretend convoy to give an impression of supporting it, while 'diversionary bombing' in Southern Norway was also arranged - all to suggest that a raiding force was bound there. As it happened though the movement eastward was carried out twice - 30th June and 1st July - the Germans did not observe it.

During June arrangements had been made to base a few Catalinas of Coastal Command in North Russia, and between 1st and 3rd July five of these proceeded to Archangel, carrying out reconnaissance patrols on the way. They then maintained a series of cross-over patrols, designed to cover the waters between Altenfiord and the convoy as it drew to the eastward.

While the Admiralty and the C-in-C, Home Fleet, were concerting the measures described, the German naval authorities were maturing their plan. Hitler had been informed on 1st June of the proposal to use the surface ships against PQ17; he was assured that the operation would only take place if it could be safely assumed that no superior enemy forces would be met with and that adequate air cover could be provided. Hitler's sanction was particularly important from the point of view of air cover, which, owing to the jealousy between the Luftwaffe and the Navy, could not be relied on except by Hitler's orders. Eventually he approved, but with the proviso that before the ships sailed the Allied aircraft carriers' disposition must be ascertained so that they could be attacked by the Luftwaffe.

This proviso was tantamount to cancelling the operation, as it would have delayed the sailing of the ships too long. Grand Admiral Raeder therefore decided that the operation should be carried out in two phases; on the convoy being located, the ships should transfer to sortie ports in the extreme north, there to await the Fuhrer's final sanction and orders to proceed.

On 14th June, Admiral Schniewind issued orders for the operation, which was known as Rosselspring (Knight's move). On confirmation of PQ17's approach, the Trondheim squadron was to move to Vestfiord and the Narvik squadron to Altenfiord. As soon as the convoy had passed 5°E., the two German squadrons were to proceed to a rendezvous 100 miles north of North Cape, and thence to attack the eastward of Bear Island between 20°E. and 30°E.

Great importance was attached to early reports of the convoy. For this, reliance was placed on air reconnaissance and U-boats. Out of the ten operational U-boats available, three were sent to patrol the north-eastern sector of Denmark Strait as early as 5th June, and by 18th June all had been disposed on the estimated convoy route.

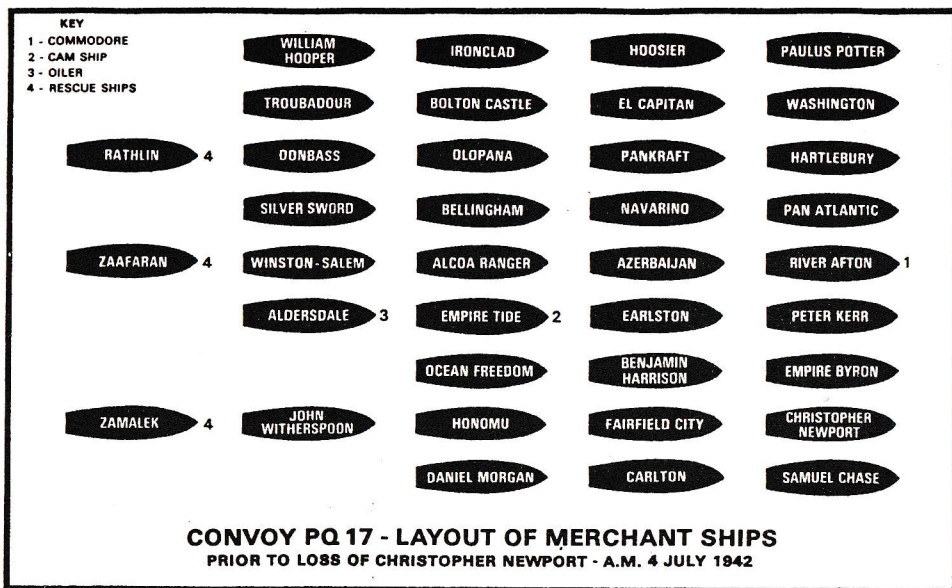
THE CONVOY

Meanwhile PQ17 had sailed from Reykjavik on 27th June. The route was longer than hitherto, the ice having receded sufficiently for it to run north of Bear Island, thus increasing the distance from the enemy air bases; moreover, all ships were bound for Archangel, Murmansk having been virtually destroyed by bombing.

The convoy consisted of 35 merchant ships under Commodore J.C.K. Dowding, escorted by HALCYON, BRITOMART, SALAMANDER and four A/S trawlers. One merchant ship grounded while leaving harbour and another was damaged by drift ice in Denmark Strait and had to put back. The oiler GRAY RANGER, which was included in the convoy, was also damaged by ice.

The close escort joined from Seydisfiord on 30th June. It consisted of six destroyers, KEPPEL (Commander J.E. Broome, S.O.), LEAMINGTON, WILTON, LEDBURY, FURY, OFFA; four corvettes LOTUS, POPPY, DIANELLA, FFS LA MALOUINE, and the submarines P614 and P615. Two A.A. ships, PALOMARES (Acting Capt. J.H. Jauncey) and POZARICA (Acting Capt. E.D.W. Lawford) joined at the same time; there were also three rescue ships, ZAAFARAN, RATHLIN and ZAMALEK, and Force "Q", the oiler ALDERSDALE and the DOUGLAS. The latter force after fuelling the escorts of PQ17 was to transfer to QP13 (which had left Russia the same day as PQ17 left Iceland) and eventually proceed to a rendezvous to fuel the destroyers with the battlefleet. Owing to the ice damage sustained by GRAY RANGER, she exchanged duties with ALDERSDALE, the latter accompanying PQ17 throughout its voyage.

First contact with the enemy occurred on 1st July, when ships of the escort



attacked U-boats sighted on the surface several miles from the convoy, both in the morning and afternoon*. At noon, too, that day the first shadowing aircraft came on the scene. Others appeared next day; thenceforward, except during brief spells of fog, the convoy was shadowed from the air almost continuously. During 1st July the weather was fine and calm, and all the escorting destroyers were refuelled. Early on the 2nd, Force "Q" was detached to rendezvous with Convoy QP13; the two convoys passed each other that afternoon in about 73°N.3°E. At about the same time PQ17 had to turn away to avoid torpedoes fired by a U-boat, which was attacked by FURY, WILTON, LOTUS and AYRSHIRE.

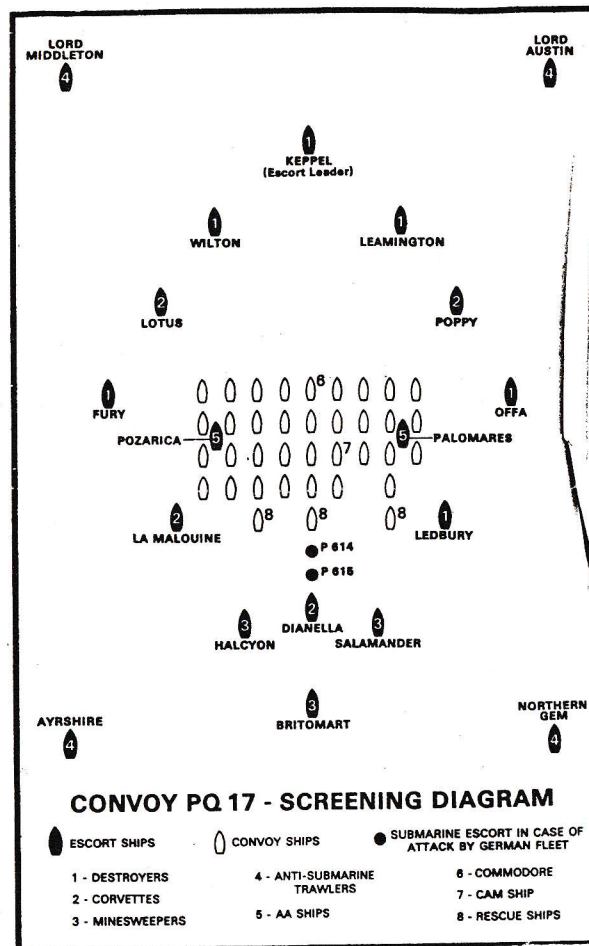
The same evening PQ17 suffered its first attack from the air. Nine torpedo aircraft approached at about 1800 in 73°30'N., 4°E., with a surface visibility of ten miles; some, without attempting to penetrate the screen dropped torpedoes, which exploded wide of the convoy. One aircraft was shot down, probably by the US destroyer ROWAN, then on her way from Rear-Admiral Hamilton's force to fuel from ALDERDALE.

This time the cruiser force had overhauled the convoy and was standing to the northward, as the Admiral had decided to steer a course parallel to the convoy some 40 miles away, beyond the vision of shadowing aircraft, in order to 'keep the enemy guessing' concerning his whereabouts. He considered that TIRPITZ might attack the westbound convoy in order to draw the British battlefleet south, while LUTZOW and SCHEER made for PQ17; 'the longer, therefore, I remained unseen the greater my chance of bringing the pocket battleships to action'.**

That night (2nd) the convoy ran into fog, which persisted till forenoon of 3rd July, enabling the change of course for the long stretch past Bear Island to be made unseen at 0700. This apparently threw the shadowing aircraft off the scent for several hours. U-boats were still about, however, and the escorting destroyers chased three away during the afternoon.

* Cmdr. Broome subsequently remarked on the difference between the Russian and Atlantic convoys: In the Atlantic he said, "With one main threat, sighting a U-boat is a clear lower deck affair, followed by determined and prolonged hunting, whereas with air attack as probably the greater threat, all one can afford to do is to throw something at the U-boats as they appear".

** Report of proceedings, R.A.1st C.S., in TSD 3288/42.



By this time Rear Admiral Hamilton was beginning to feel that he was on the wrong side of the convoy, because the German ships might attack in thick weather and escape unscathed, and that the time had come to disclose his position. Accordingly, he stood towards the convoy, sighting first the shadowing aircraft and then the convoy, some 20 miles off, at about 1630. Thinking his ships had been seen by the shadowers, though actually they had not, he then opened out to his former distance. Soon afterwards a signal came from the Admiralty to say that air reconnaissance showed the edge of the icefield to be much further north than had been supposed. Rear Admiral Hamilton, therefore, sent LONDON's aircraft to tell Commander Broome to pass 70 miles north of Bear Island, anticipating an Admiralty signal to similar effect, and again with orders for the convoy to keep 400 miles from Banak air station. The convoy duly altered course to the northward, though not so much as Rear-Admiral Hamilton wished, for Com-

mander Broome was impressed with the importance of making progress eastward, as the best means of getting the convoy through, which the Admiralty had pointed out in their instructions.

The cruisers again closed the convoy at 2215 that night, when it was some 30 miles north-west of Bear Island. This time the shadowers reported them, 'which pleased me considerably' said Rear-Admiral Hamilton, because he had just heard that German ships were on the move. The weather had prevented air reconnaissance of the Norwegian ports for several days; but in the afternoon of 3rd July the British aircraft were able to report that TIRPITZ and HIPPER had left Trondheim, though the Narvik reconnaissance had once more failed. Admiral Tovey was already steering with the battlefleet for a cruising area 150 to 200 miles north-west of Bear Island, from which VICTORIOUS could send aircraft to defend the convoy on the 4th, if German ships attacked it. Rear-Admiral Hamilton decided to continue with the convoy, using the discretion allowed to him by the instructions.

Actually the preliminary moves of the German plan had started the previous afternoon (2nd July), when TIRPITZ and HIPPER left Trondheim for Gimsøystrømen in the Lofoten Islands near the entrance to Vest Fiord, and SCHEER and LUTZOW, accompanied by destroyers Z24, Z27, Z28, Z29, Z30 and RICHARD BELIZEN, left Narvik for Altenfiord. LUTZOW did not get far as she grounded in Tjelsund while leaving Ofot Fjord and could take no further part. The remaining ships arrived

at their destinations on the 3rd, but three of the destroyers of the TIRPITZ group, HANS LODY, THEODOR RIEDEL and KARL GALSTER grounded on arrival, and returned to Trondheim a day or so later, leaving only FRIEDRICH IHN with the group.

By the early morning of the 4th July, PQ17 was about 60 miles north of Bear Island. There it sustained its first loss. Just before 0500 a single aircraft torpedoed 'through a hole in the fog' the CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT, leading ship of one of the columns; she had to be sunk, while a rescue ship embarked her crew.

About midday, 4th, the Admiralty gave Rear-Admiral Hamilton leave to go east of longitude 25°E., should the situation require it, but subject to his discretion and to contrary orders from Admiral Tovey. The signal read: **Immediate. Reference Admiralty message 0157, 27th, para. (j) - unless otherwise ordered by C in C, Home Fleet, you may proceed eastward of 25°E. should situation demand it. (ii) This is not to be taken as urging you to proceed eastward against your discretion. T.O.O.1230B/4th July.** Admiral Tovey, who had no information that seemed to justify the change of plan, instructed the cruisers to withdraw when the convoy was east of the meridian, or earlier at the Rear-Admiral's discretion, unless the Admiralty assured him that he could not meet TIRPITZ. This signal crossed one sent by Rear-Admiral Hamilton at 1520 in which he stated that he was remaining in the vicinity of the convoy till the enemy surface situation clarified, but certainly not later than 1400, 5th July. At 1809 he replied that he intended withdrawing to the westward about 2200 that evening, on completion of fuelling destroyers. Another signal from the Admiralty reached him about 1930 telling him that further information might be available shortly and to remain with the convoy pending further instructions. At this time he was keeping some 10 to 20 miles ahead of the convoy, which he had closed early in the afternoon, zigzagging across its line of advance. The Rear-Admiral's Report of Proceedings states: "I had very carefully weighed the pros. and cons. of being in or out of the convoy now that it had entered the most dangerous area for air attack, and I had come to the conclusion that the only advantage of being in the convoy was increased anti-aircraft protection to the convoy. Against this was the very great risk of damage to my force, either from air attack or U-boats, while fulfilling a duty for which, at this stage, it was not intended. I decided, therefore, to keep clear of the convoy; and in the light of events I am more than ever convinced that it is correct for cruisers never to be restricted in movement and speed by stationing them in the convoy."

Meanwhile the convoy, though constantly shadowed, had had a fairly quiet day. At 1645 course was altered from 090° to 045° on the Rear-Admiral's orders, in order to open the distance from Banak airfield to 400 miles. At 1930 there came a half-hearted attack by a few bombers, whose nearest bombs 'fell through the clouds ahead of the convoy' between KEPPEL and USS WAINWRIGHT (come from the cruiser force to oil). It was meant to be a combined torpedo and bombing attack; half a dozen Hell15 aircraft had been circling the horizon for some time, and a torpedo exploded harmlessly outside the convoy. Commander Broome remarked that WAINWRIGHT's 'Fourth of July enthusiasm' as she 'sped round the convoy worrying the circling aircraft' with long range fire was largely the cause of the enemy's failure.

A more serious torpedo attack was made an hour later, the anti-aircraft ship PALOMARES detecting 25 aircraft coming up from astern at 2020. They attacked from the starboard quarter flying fast and low. Their leader showed great determination, hitting NAVARINO in the middle of the convoy with two torpedoes, before he crashed in flames just ahead of KEPPEL. The remainder were not so bold. 'Had they kept up with him, dividing and generally embarrassing the A.A. fire' wrote Commander Broome, 'many ships would have been sunk.' As it was, they only succeeded in torpedoing two other ships, WILLIAM HOOPER, rear ship of the port wing column, and the Russian tanker AZERBAIDJAN. NAVARINA and WILLIAM HOOPER had to be sunk, but on closing AZERBAIDJAN Commander Broome found her 'holed but happy, capable of 9 knots, with the female part of the watch hoisting the boats; she eventually reached harbour. Commander Broome remarked on the good shooting of the escort and the convoy; four aircraft were thought to have been shot down, including one by OFFA and one by WAINWRIGHT. (According to the Germans three were shot down and one damaged). The three rescue ships with the convoy

proved their value by picking up survivors quickly and efficiently.

Rear-Admiral Hamilton watched the air attacks, much surprised at the Germans for leaving his ships alone, though they were well in sight. He remarked on the vital importance of shooting down shadowing aircraft. There was little chance of doing so however, though Commander Broome considered afterwards that perhaps he ought to have used for this purpose his only Hurricane aircraft, in the C.A.M. ship EMPIRE TIDE.

It was at this juncture that the threat of potential danger from the German heavy ships had its effect, though there was no certain news of their whereabouts. It will therefore be convenient to consider the general situation at this time.

The situation at what proved to be the critical moment of PQ17's passage was thus as follows. The convoy, then about 130 miles north-east of Bear Island, had just come through the heavy air attack remarkably well; the convoy discipline and shooting had been admirable and a substantial toll had been taken of the enemy. A feeling of elation prevailed; in the words of Commander Broome, 'My impression of seeing the resolution displayed by the convoy and its escort was that, provided the ammunition lasted, PQ17 could get anywhere.'

Rear-Admiral Hamilton was still covering the convoy some ten miles to the north-eastward, with orders from the Admiralty to continue to do so till further orders; but for this, he had intended parting company in about an hour's time in accordance with Commander-in-Chief's latest signal. Some 350 miles to the westward the heavy covering force was cruising in the area south-west of Spitzbergen.

Turning to the Germans, the approval of the Fuhrer for sailing the heavy ships to the attack had not yet been obtained; but the Naval Staff, fearing it might be delayed too long, had sanctioned the TIRPITZ force joining the pocket battleships at Altenfiord and this had been done the previous night (3rd/4th July). Admiral Tovey's covering force had been sighted some 300 miles south-west of the convoy on 3rd July; since then nothing had been seen of it, and in view of Hitler's stringent orders that the carriers were to be located and put out of action before launching the operation, Grand-Admiral Raeder decided that nothing further could be done for the present. There they remained till the afternoon of 5th July.

At the Admiralty the situation was being watched with increasing anxiety. It had been known since 3rd July that the heavy ships had left Trondheim, and in the afternoon of the 4th that the northern squadron had left Narvik; but none of the ships had been located. That evening the First Sea Lord called a staff meeting to consider the situation. It was appreciated that an attack might develop any time after 0200 next morning, 5th. If the attack was pressed home in full strength while Rear-Admiral Hamilton's cruisers (two of which were American) were still present, it seemed it could only result in their destruction, in addition to that of the convoy. Against such an attack, the more widely the merchant ships were dispersed, the better seemed their chances of escape. Once the alarm had been given, the enemy raiders would not wish to spend more time than than necessary in the neighbourhood rounding up odd groups of ships. (It is now known that this was emphasised in the German operation orders). But an 8 knot convoy takes some appreciable time to scatter effectively, and the matter was further complicated by uncertainty as to the extent the ice would permit manoeuvring to the northward, i.e. away from the probable direction of attack. On the other hand, the convoy was still some 800 miles from its destination. Air and U-boat attacks had already started, and were certain to continue on a heavy scale. Once scattered, the isolated groups and units of the convoy would present comparatively easy targets and heavy casualties had to be expected.

"SCATTER"

Shortly after 2100, 4th July, the decision was taken; the cruisers must withdraw and the convoy must scatter immediately. The Admiralty decision was conveyed to Rear-Admiral Hamilton in the following three signals:-

"MOST IMMEDIATE. CRUISER FORCE WITHDRAW TO WESTWARD AT HIGH SPEED" (2111 B/4)

"IMMEDIATE. OWING TO THREAT FROM SURFACE SHIPS, CONVOY IS TO DISPERSE AND PROCEED TO RUSSIAN PORTS" (2123 B/4)

"MOST IMMEDIATE. MY 2123/4. CONVOY TO SCATTER" (2136 B/4)

To the Rear-Admiral, these signals could only mean that the further information the Admiralty had been hoping for at 1858 had indeed come in and was of such a nature as to render imperative the drastic measures now ordered. Actually, the emphasis on the use of high speed by the cruisers was due to reports of a massing of enemy submarines between 11° and 20°E.; and the order to scatter was intended merely as a technical amendment to the term 'disperse' used in the previous signal. This could not have been known by the recipients and the cumulative effect of the three signals - especially as the last had a more urgent priority marking than the middle one - was to imply that pressing danger was actually upon them. As Commander Broome put it, he expected to see the cruisers open fire and the enemy's masts appear on the horizon at any moment. In this belief he decided to take the destroyers of the escort to reinforce the cruiser force, and ordered the two submarines to stay near the convoy when it scattered and to try to attack the enemy, while the rest of the escorting ships were to proceed independently to Archangel.

At 2215, 4th July, Commander Broome passed the signal to scatter to Commodore Dowding, the convoy being then in 75°55'N., 27°52'E., and he himself with the destroyers steered to join Admiral Hamilton. The decision to leave PQ17 and the remaining escort ships at such a moment was described by Commander Broome as the hardest he had ever had to make; but in the circumstances that seemed to have arisen it was clearly the right one to comply with the Commander-in-Chief's standing instructions and was approved both by Rear-Admiral Hamilton at the time and subsequently by the Commander-in-Chief.

Rear-Admiral Hamilton received the Admiralty orders at 2200. NORFOLK had then just flown off her aircraft on an ice patrol; he therefore stood on to the eastward for half an hour while endeavours were made to recall it. These were without success, and at 2230 the force turned to a westerly course, steering to pass to the southward of the convoy, i.e. between it and the probable direction of the enemy. (NORFOLK's aircraft eventually fell in with PALOMARES, by whom its crew was rescued). The visibility was extremely variable with numerous fog patches 'made all the more interesting by the presence of growlers.' An hour later the merchant ships, by that time on widely divergent courses, were passed; there we will leave them for the present, while the cruiser force reinforced by Commander Broome's destroyers, withdrew to the westward at 25 knots.

Rear-Admiral Hamilton was much concerned at the effect the apparent desertion of the merchant ships might have on morale.

'Assuming, as we all did assume, that the scattering of the convoy heralded the imminent approach of enemy surface forces, we were - in the eyes of all who did not know the full story - running away, and at high speed.'

Had he been aware that the Admiralty had no further information of the enemy heavy units than he himself possessed, he would have remained in a covering position until the convoy was widely dispersed, when he could have parted company in a less ostentatious manner.

He personally regarded the dispersal of the convoy 800 miles from its destination during the all-daylight period as too hazardous, and would have preferred to have kept it in formation, and resorted to smoke screening tactics (in which he had specially exercised his ships) had the enemy surface forces appeared, as had been done by Rear-Admiral Vian in the Mediterranean three months previously.

The whole episode emphasises the necessity for the Admiralty to keep the Senior Officer conducting an operation fully primed with all the information germane

to it they possess, and whatever executive orders they may decide to send him in an emergency, to follow them up as soon as possible with the intelligence (or, as in this case, the lack of intelligence) on which they were based. It also illustrates the difficulty in which a junior and detached Admiral may be placed when receiving directions from two superior authorities (in this case the Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief) both of whom have information not imparted to him. (Hamilton was unaware of the phone conversation between the First Sea Lord and Sir John Tovey and consequently was unprepared for the order to scatter the convoy.)

As time went on with no further developments Rear-Admiral Hamilton became more and more puzzled as to what could have led to the sudden scattering of the convoy. But whatever the reason, the orders for his own force were peremptory, so he maintained his westerly course at 25 knots. Thick fog was encountered soon after midnight, which persisted with brief intervals till 0630, 5th July. Commander Broome, equally mystified by the course of events, soon began to feel that his place was with the merchant ships; but he thought Rear-Admiral Hamilton was acting on fuller information than he himself possessed and expected him to send the escort destroyers back to their erstwhile charges the moment he deemed it advisable. As soon as the fog lifted sufficiently for visual signalling he informed the Rear-Admiral of his last hurried instructions to PQ17 and requested that they should be amplified or amended as necessary.

Actually Rear-Admiral Hamilton, who was still under the impression that the enemy forces were in close proximity, argued that once the convoy had scattered they would leave it to their air forces and submarines to deal with (as in fact they did); but he credited them with more enterprise than they possessed and expected them to transfer attentions to his own force. Reinforced by Commander Broome's destroyers, he felt he could fight a delaying action, and had a good chance of leading the enemy within reach of the VICTORIOUS's aircraft, and possibly the Commander-in-Chief's heavy ships.

At 0700, being then in 75°40'N., 16°E., Rear-Admiral Hamilton reduced to 20 knots, and at 0930, on crossing the meridian 13°E., he altered course to 230° in the direction of Jan Meyen Island. It was not until that forenoon that the situation as regards the enemy heavy ships was made clear to him.

Meanwhile, he had to decide what to do with Commander Broome's destroyers. The merchant ships were widely scattered and it seemed the destroyers "could do little except screen individual ships, if they could find them. In view of their fuel situation and the difficulties they would have in finding an oiler, I considered that, with the possibility of offensive action by the battlefleet and VICTORIOUS against the enemy heavy ships, the most useful service the destroyers could perform would be with the battlefleet". (Report of proceedings, R.A.1st C.S. (in T.S.D. 3288/42).

Accordingly, he ordered them to fuel from LONDON and NORFOLK. By 1630, LEDBURY, WILTON, ROWAN and KEPPEL had been completed; And Admiral Hamilton, who had received no further instructions since the order to withdraw the previous evening, continued to steer 230° at 20 knots. Throughout the day the weather was 'brilliant' and the visibility extreme; but nothing was seen of the enemy till 1740, when a Focke Wulf made contact, and reported the force (correctly) in 74°30'N., 7°40'E. Having been located, Admiral Hamilton broke wireless silence and at 1830 informed the Commander-in-Chief of his position, course and speed and the composition of his force. This was the first intimation received by Sir John Tovey that Commander Broome's destroyers were still with the cruisers - a circumstance he regretted in his C-in-C's despatch M.052452/43.

"The decision to concentrate the escorting destroyers in the cruiser force was, in these circumstances, correct, but once he was clear of the convoy and in default of information that TIRPITZ was near, Rear-Admiral commanding 1st Cruiser Squadron should have released these destroyers instructing them to rejoin the scattered convoy: their value for anti-U-boat purposes, and rounding up scattered ships, and, if TIRPITZ had appeared, for diverting and delaying her, would have been considerable....."

The Commander-in-Chief, having spent 4th July cruising about 150 miles north-west of Bear Island, turned to the south-westward in the early morning of the 5th, and was then on his way to Scapa some 120 miles south-west of Rear-Admiral Hamilton. Shortly afterwards there came news at last of the German heavy ships. The Russian submarine K21 reported TIRPITZ, SCHEER and eight destroyers in 71°25'N., 23°40'E. (some 45 miles N.W. of North Cape) steering 045° at 1700, 5th July, and claimed to have hit TIRPITZ with two torpedoes. (No mention of any attack by a hostile submarine appears in the TIRPITZ war diary, and she suffered no damage). An hour or so later, at 1816, a reconnoitring aircraft reported 11 strange ships in 71°41'N., 27°10'E., steering 065°, 10 knots; and lastly submarine P54, which with other Allied submarines, was shifting further east from her original station, reported TIRPITZ and HIPPER, escorted by at least six destroyers and eight aircraft in 71°30'N., 28°40'E., steering 060°, 22 knots at 2029. She had sighted the enemy's smoke over an hour earlier and had tried to close within attacking range, on the surface, till forced by aircraft to dive, and then at full speed under water; but the enemy passed her ten miles off. TRIDENT, on her way to her outer patrol line, having received the aircraft report timed 1816, stretched south-east beyond her station till midnight, 5th/6th, reaching as far as 32°25'E., but saw nothing of the enemy, though the visibility was at its maximum. Nothing more was heard of the German ships for two days.

Actually, their cruise was of short duration. Hitler's permission to launch the operation had only been received that forenoon (5th), and the executive order to proceed to sea was given at 1137. Rear-Admiral Hamilton's cruisers were then known to be moving to the westward and Admiral Tovey's covering force was some 450 miles alike from the convoy and the North Cape; it seemed there would be no special danger, provided the German force could approach the merchant ships unseen and engage them for as short a time as possible. But the Allied sighting reports off North Cape from 1700 onwards were intercepted and the German Naval Staff calculated that Admiral Tovey would be able to close sufficiently to launch an air attack before they got back to harbour, if they continued operations against the merchant ships after 0100 on 6th. Air and U-boat attacks were taking a heavy toll - they accounted for a dozen ships that day - and it did not seem that the few stragglers that might fall to the surface craft were worth the effort. At 2132, 5th July, orders were given to abandon the operation, much to Admiral Schniewind's regret, and twenty minutes later the force, then in 71°38'N., 31°05'E., reversed its course to return to Altenfiord. During the night of 5th/6th July the Admiralty made three signals to the C-in-C, Home Fleet, suggesting that TIRPITZ might be 'reluctant to go as far as the convoy' if the battlefleet was sighted steering to the eastward; and that aircraft from VICTORIOUS might be able to attack her, if she had been damaged by the Russian submarines. The latter appeared to Admiral Tovey unlikely, for it seemed certain that TIRPITZ, especially if damaged, would not be sailed down the Norwegian Coast until adequate fighter cover and seaward reconnaissance were available. However, arrangements were made for the fleet to reverse its course if the approach of enemy aircraft was detected, and at 0645, 6th July, course was altered back to the north-eastward. An hour later an enemy aircraft passed over the fleet above the clouds; endeavours to attract its attention by gunfire and fighters was unsuccessful. That forenoon Rear-Admiral Hamilton's force joined the fleet (1040). But the weather was unsuitable for air reconnaissance and Admiral Tovey felt that there was nothing to be gained by continuing to the north-eastward. Rear-Admiral Hamilton's cruisers with eight destroyers, were detached to Seidisfiord at 1230, and the battlefleet turned to the southward again shortly afterwards. All ships reached harbour on the 8th. The last news of the enemy ships came on 7th July, when a British aircraft working from Vaenga, near Murmansk, reported TIRPITZ, LUTZOW (actually it was SCHEER) and HIPPER with some destroyers, followed by an oiler from a neighbouring fiord, turning out of Lang Fiord in Arnoy (70°00'N. 20°30'E.). By this time the British heavy ships were well on their way home, but an attempt to attack the enemy once again was made by submarines. Anticipating their return to Narvik, STURGEON and MINERVE had been ordered on 6th July to leave the main patrol line and to patrol off the mouth of Vest Fiord on 7th and 8th, one at a

time, in case TIRPITZ should pass outside the Lofoten Islands, owing to her heavy draught and possible damage. Nothing came of this, however, nor of a further patrol carried out by STURGEON on the night 9th/10th, close inshore in the Inner Lead some 70 miles north of Trondheim, in case any German ships should be going to that port; and TIRPITZ and her consorts duly arrived at Narvik without incident.

TO RETURN TO THE CONVOY:

The sudden order to scatter came to Commodore Dowding as an unpleasant surprise. Like Rear-Admiral Hamilton and Commander Broome, he did not doubt that it heralded the immediate appearance of enemy heavy ships, and as the escorting destroyers parted company to join the cruisers, he signalled to KEPPEL: "**Many thanks; goodbye and good hunting,**" to which Commander Broome replied "**It is a grim business leaving you here.**"

It was indeed a grim business and the gravity of the situation was clear to all; whether attack by surface craft developed in a few minutes or by aircraft and submarines during the next few days, the plight of the individual merchant ships - deprived of their mutual support and of their escort - was parlous in the extreme.

Commodore Dowding's report (MO11511/42) stated: 'The convoy scattered as laid down.....in perfect order, though it must have been apparent to the ships that had to turn to the south-west that they were heading towards where most trouble may be expected'. The merchant ships proceeded mostly alone, or in groups of two or three. PALOMARES and POZARICA each took charge of a group, each collecting also two or three minesweepers or corvettes to act as a screen; they joined company next day, 5th July, and steered for Novaya Zemlya. SALAMANDER accompanied two merchantmen and a rescue ship. DIANELLA escorting the submarines, stood by them until clear of the convoy, when they separated to patrol in its wake, while the corvette went on by herself. At first the different groups spread on courses ranging from north to east, a few steering afterwards for Archangel, most seeking shelter in Novaya Zemlya. But less than half the merchant ships reached even 'horrid Zemlya's frozen realms', for 17 in addition to the oiler ALDERSDALE and rescue ship ZAAFARAN were sunk during the next three days by bombing aircraft and U-boats. Commander Broome subsequently reported: "**I would like to place on record the cheerful way ALDERSDALE took on an unexpected task (relieving GREY RANGER) and dealt with it. Oiling destroyers was almost continuous and to handle the gear it was necessary to clear lower deck, on each occasion, in order to keep the A.A. armament manned.....there were no complaints. The spirit of that ship was shown in a signal made to KEPPEL after the CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT was torpedoed in which the Captain volunteered to take the ship in tow.**" (It is satisfactory to record that the Master (Captain A. Hobson) and all his ship's company were picked up by SALAMANDER almost immediately after abandoning ship). The bulk of the losses took place on the 5th while the ships were in the far north, six, BOLTON CASTLE, FAIRFIELD CITY, PAN KRAFT, PETER KERR, WASHINGTON and PAULUS POTTER were sunk by bombs and six, EARLSTON, EMPIRE BYRON, RIVER AFTON (Commodore), CARLTON, DANIEL MORGAN and HONOMU were torpedoed by submarines in an area roughly from 74° to 77°N. and from 35° to 45°E. One ship PAN ATLANTIC was bombed on 6th. Four, HARTLEBURY, JOHN WITHERSPOON, ALCOA RANGER and OLOPANA were torpedoed off the south-west coast of Novaya Zelya between the evening of 6th and the early morning of 8th, three by the same U-boat U255.

By 7th July, most of the escort, the rescue ship ZAMALEK and five merchant ships, OCEAN FREEDOM, HOOSIER, BENJAMIN HARRISON, EL CAPITAN and SAMUEL CHASE, had reached Matochkin Strait. Commodore Dowding, whose ship RIVER AFTON had been sunk by a U-boat on 5th, arrived in LOTUS, which had rescued him and 36 survivors, including the Master, Captain Charlton, after 3½ hours on rafts and floats. After a conference on PALOMARES, these merchantmen were formed into a convoy and sailed that evening, escorted by POZARICA, PALOMARES, HALCYON, SALAMANDER, BRITOMART, POPPY, LOTUS, LA MALOUINE and three trawlers LORD AUSTIN, LORD MIDDLETON and NORTHERN GEM. BENJAMIN HARRISON soon got separated in a fog and returned to Matochkin Strait. (She eventually reached Archangel). But the remainder were all in company when the weather cleared temporarily during the forenoon of 8th July, and course was shaped to pass east and south of Kolguef Island.

It was an anxious passage; much fog and ice were encountered and U-boats were known to be about. From time to time boatloads of survivors from ships already sunk were met with and picked up - a reminder of the fate that might be in store for any of them.

During the night of 9th/10th some 40 bombers carried out high level attacks on the little convoy, apparently guided by submarines the previous evening. The attacks lasted four hours: HOOSIER and EL CAPITAN were sunk by near misses some 60 miles north-west of Cape Kanin. Four aircraft were believed to be shot down. The attacks ended about 0230, 10th July, and half an hour later two Russian flying boats appeared.

The surviving ships arrived at Archangel the following day, 11th July; "Not a successful convoy. Three ships brought into port out of 37" to quote Commodore Dowding's report. Things were not quite so bad as that, however. The rescue ship RATHLIN with two merchant ships, DONBASS and BELLINGHAM had arrived on 9th, having shot down an aircraft the day before, and before long, news of other ships sheltering in Novaya Zemlya waters began to come in.

At his special request, Commodore Dowding, despite all he had been through, left Archangel in POPPY on 16th July, in company with LOTUS (Lieut. H.J.Hall, RNR., S.O. Escorts) and LA MALOUINE, to form these merchant ships into a convoy and bring them back to Archangel. After a stormy passage they arrived at Byelushya Bay on the 19th; there 12 survivors from OLOPANA were found. During the day the coast was searched between South and North Guisini Nos; in the evening WINSTON SALEM was found aground south-east of North Guisini Nos, and later EMPIRE TIDE at anchor in Moller Bay. The next morning Matochkin Strait was entered. There five merchant ships from PQ17 were found at anchor - BENJAMIN HARRISON, SILVER SWORD, TROUBADOR, IRONCLAD, and AZERBAIDJAN - besides a Russian icebreaker MURMAN, and trawler, KEROV, and H.M. trawler AYRSHIRE (Lieut.L.J.Gradwell RNRV). The latter had done fine work, in collecting SILVER SWORD, TROUBADOR and IRONCLAD soon after the convoy scattered. With them she steered a northerly course close east of Hope Island, till ice was encountered, when course was altered to the eastward. In the evening of 5th July, Lieut. Gradwell decided to enter the ice to avoid detection, camouflaging the ships by painting them white, and penetrated some 20 miles into the icefield, where they remained till the 7th, when they continued their voyage to Novaya Zemlya, arriving at Matochkin Strait on the 11th. None of the ships had a large scale chart and in an attempt to sail for Archangel, IRONCLAD ran aground twice and TROUBADOR once. Both ships were refloated by the efforts of AYRSHIRE which then managed to pilot them some 20 miles up the strait, where they remained well camouflaged and unmolested.

Commodore Dowding wasted no time. A conference was held in the forenoon, and in the evening all ships sailed. (After they had sailed a U-boat arrived, and finding no ships, bombed the signal station at Guisini Nos. The commodore sailed in the leading icebreaker MURMAN. EMPIRE TIDE which had a lot of survivors from sunken ships on board, joined the convoy from Moller Bay early on 21st July. WINSTON SALEM was still aground, with two Russian tugs standing by.

Much fog was encountered during the passage, which apart from one or two U-boat alarms was uneventful. The escort was reinforced by POZARICA, BRAMBLE, HAZARD, LEDA, DIANELLA and two Russian destroyers on 22nd July, and the convoy arrived safely in Archangel on the evening of 24th.

Four days later (28th July) WINSTON SALEM, having been re-floated under the superintendence of the American Naval Attache, Captain S.D. Frankel, who flew to Novaya Zemlya in an antique Catalina, arrived at Molotovsk. This was the last ship of the ill-fated PQ17 to reach harbour, making a total of 11 survivors all told out of 35 merchant ships and one oiler that set out from Iceland. Air attack had destroyed 13 (besides ZAAFARAN) at a cost of six aircraft. (We had claimed nine, but Luftwaffe records show six). Submarines had sunk 10 without loss to themselves. (In some cases U-boats had administered the coup-de-grâce to ships already damaged by air attack). Two more merchant ships had fallen by the wayside and were still in Icelandic waters.

It is to be noted that, with the exception of three ships, these heavy losses occurred after PQ17 had ceased to be a convoy and ships had scattered. A Russian

Admiral is said to have observed that TIRPITZ had achieved her object simply by making the convoy an easy prey for submarines and aircraft.

This is the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet in his despatch M.052452/43 (Case 7607).

"The order to scatter the convoy", he wrote, "had, in my opinion, been premature; its results were disastrous. The convoy had so far covered more than half its route with the loss of only three ships. Now its ships, spread over a wide area, were exposed without defence to the powerful enemy U-boat and air forces. The enemy took prompt advantage of this situation, operating both weapons to their full capacity....."

In point of fact, the episode raises once again the exceedingly difficult problem of how far the Admiralty, with its overall responsibility and superior intelligence organisation, ought to exercise executive control over 'the man on the spot'. In this instance it is hard to resist the conclusion that it would have been better to have kept Sir John Tovey and Rear-Admiral Hamilton informed of precisely what was known of enemy surface craft movements, and left them to decide what to do. It is certain, for example, that of the three authorities the Rear-Admiral alone was aware of the existing weather conditions - with all their variations from thick fog to extreme visibility or flat calm to full gale - and on this score was in the best position to assess the chances of evasion or a successful defence.

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Photo Godfrey Winn

Merchant seamen survivors being taken onboard from their upturned lifeboat to which they had been clinging.

"PQ17 ROLL CALL"

Following vessels sunk with loss of lives.

VESSEL	FLAG	YEAR	TONS	DATE	POSITION	ACTION	R.I.P.
CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT	USA	1942	7191	4 JULY	70°N 20°E	Aircraft torpedo.	3 dead
NAVARINO	UK	1937	4841	4 JULY	75°N 25°E	" "	1 dead
WILLIAM HOOPER	USA	1942	7177	4 JULY	76°N 27°E	" "	3 dead
EMPIRE BYRON	UK	1941	6645	5 JULY	76°N 33°E	U703 torpedo.	18 dead
CARLTON	USA	1920	5127	5 JULY	76°N 33°E	U88	4 dead
HONOMU	USA	1919	6977	5 JULY	75°N 37°E	U456	19 dead
RIVER AFTON (Cmdre)	UK	1937	5423	5 JULY	73°N 43°E	U703	23 dead
DANIEL MORGAN	USA	1942	7177	5 JULY	76°N 33°E	U88	3 dead
FAIRFIELD CITY	USA	1921	5686	5 JULY	75°N 41°E	Aircraft bombs.	6 dead
ZAAFARAN Rescue Ship	UK	1921	1559	5 JULY	75°N 44°E	" "	1 dead
PAN KRAFT	USA	1919	5644	5 JULY	77°N 39°E	" "	2 dead
JOHN WITHERSPOON	USA	1942	7180	6 JULY	71°N 53°E	U255 torpedo	1 dead
PAN ATLANTIC	USA	1919	5411	6 JULY	74°N 43°E	Aircraft bombs	26 dead
HARTLEBURY	UK	1937	5082	7 JULY	73°N 52°E	U355 torpedo	37 dead
OLOPANA	USA	1920	6069	8 JULY	72°N 51°E	U255	6 dead

Following vessels sunk without loss of life.

EARLSTON	UK	1941	7494	5 JULY	74°N 32°E	U334 torpedo.	
PAULUS POTTER	DUTCH	1942	7168	5 JULY	77°N 32°E	A/C bomb & U255 guns	13/7
BOLTON CASTLE	UK	1939	5203	5 JULY	77°N 32°E	Aircraft bombs	
WASHINGTON	USA	1919	5564	5 JULY	77°N 32°E	" "	
PETER KERR	USA	1920	6476	5 JULY	74°N 34°E	" "	
ALDERSDALE (Oiler)	UK	1937	8402	7 JULY	75°N 43°E	U457 torpedo.	
ALCOA RANGER	USA	1919	5116	7 JULY	71°N 51°E	U255	
HOOSIER	USA	1920	5060	10 JULY	70°N 41°E	U376	
EL KAPITAN	PANA.	1917	5255	10 JULY	70°N 40°E	U251	

Following vessels completed voyage.

RATHLIN Rescue Ship	UK	1936	1600	9TH JULY	ARRIVED	ARCHANGEL	
DONBASS	USSR	1931	7925	9TH	" "	" "	
BELLINGHAM	USA	1920	5345	9TH	" "	" "	
ZAMALEK Rescue Ship	UK	1921	1567	11TH	" "	" "	
OCEAN FREEDOM	UK	1942	7173	11TH	" "	" "	
SAMUEL CHASE	USA	1942	7191	11TH	" "	" "	
EMPIRE TIDE Cam Ship	UK	1941	6978	24TH	" "	" "	
BENJAMIN HARRISON	USA	1942	7191	24TH	" "	" "	
SILVER SWORD	USA	1919	4937	24TH	" "	" "	
TROUBADOR	NORW.	1920	5808	24TH	" "	" "	
IRONCLAD	USA	1919	5685	24TH	" "	" "	
AZERBAIDJAN (Tanker)	USSR	1932	6114	24TH	" "	" "	
WINSTON-SALEM	USA	1920	6223	28TH	" "	MOLOTOVSK	

Ship's positions are approximate, many dead reckonings being much in error, e.g. "DANIEL MORGAN" and "FAIRFIELD CITY" were actually together when sunk, but their respective D.R.s place them 90 miles apart.

Sources of Information

Lloyd's Register 1941-2, Lloyds Register 1942-3 and their Supplements. Ships' logs; C & D lists; articles held by Registrar General of Shipping, Cardiff U.S. Armed Guard and voyage reports, and private papers.

WHY "PQ"?

"PQ" were the initials of Commander Edwards R.N. who was responsible for planning the Russian Convoys.

What was the significance of the latter convoy designations "JW" and "RA"? Does anyone know?

PQ17 CONVOY ESCORTS

As listed in Admiralty Memo ADM199/757

CLOSE ESCORT

BRITOMART)
HALCYON)
SALAMANDER)
LORD AUSTIN)
AYRSHIRE)—27 June to 4 July.
NORTHERN GEM)
MIDDLETON)
PALOMARES)
POZARICA)
DOUGLAS)—27 June to 2 July.
KEPPEL)
OFFA)
FURY)
LEAMINGTON)
LEDBURY)
WILTON)—30 June to 4 July
LOTUS)
POPPY)
LA MALOUINE)
DIANELLA)
P615 (submarine))—27 June to 4 July.
P614 (" "))—30 June to 4 July.
LONDON)
NORFOLK)
TUSCALOOSA)
WICHITA)—1 July to 4 July.
ROWAN)
WAINWRIGHT)

DISTANT COVER

DUKE OF YORK
WASHINGTON
VICTORIOUS
NIGERIA
CUMBERLAND
FAULKNER
ONSLAUGHT
MIDDLETON
ESCAPADE
BLANKNEY
MARTIN
MARNE
WHEATLAND
ONSLOW
ASHANTI
MAYRANT
RHIND



Photo Godfrey Wim Collection

The Russian tanker AZERBAIJAN drops astern of convoy after low level torpedo attack by HE111s. Subsequently reboarded, and brought into port by her mixed crew

H.M.S. POPPY IN PQ17 (JUNE - SEPTEMBER 1942)

By Denis C Brooke, a 'green' Sub-Lieut R.N.V.R.

POPPY was not the "Atlantic-hardened corvette" described by Ewart Brookes in his book "The Gates of Hell". She was in fact brand new and on her maiden convoy voyage (as was LOTUS with whom she did her working up.)

She left Tobermorey, the training base for newly commissioned ships, with Commodore Stevenson's offer to "remove all the officers as incompetent" unaccepted by the C.O. Lieut. N.K. Boyd, RNR. and arrived at Londonderry after exercises in the Hebrides. A new camouflage scheme was painted on and we were instructed to load as much ammunition as we could carry. We sailed for Iceland with POZARICA, PALOMARES, LOTUS, LA MALOUINE (who flew the Belgian ensign as well as the British, but whose crew were all R.N.) and DIANELLA.

We arrived at Seydisfiord and obviously in for something special by the impressive array of heavy ships at anchor. It was quite something to exchange courtesies with LONDON and NORFOLK as we passed up the fiord. The convoy conference and we sailed in the evening. I, as a green Sub. Lieut. RNR, got a sharp rebuke from the C.O. for pestering him for code and cypher details before we were out of the fiord. "You'll get all the information you want in due course" and for my first experience of ocean convoys it was quite a lot!

I found myself watch keeping with the First Lieut. Lt. V.G.P.Paremaine RNR and I see that I noted down some of the C.O.'s remarks. "Call me if the weather changes". "Have I got to spend the whole time on the bridge to know what the weather's like?" It was his first command and he was concerned that nothing should go wrong. "Go on, call the hands!" was blasted at me in my dilemma of trying not to disturb him in his bunk in the bridge-house, and at the same time, concerned that nothing should go wrong, secure the sea-water temperature from the engine room, by means of a voice pipe.

We were stationed on the starboard bow of the convoy in position "D" for "Duff", with the old USN four-stacker LEAMINGTON ahead and to port in "C" for "Charlie" and, I imagine, NORTHERN GEM astern of us in "E" for "EDWARD" - zigzagging 3000 yards from the convoy.

Blohm & Voss reconnaissance aircraft circled the convoy early, beyond gun range. A Walrus aircraft came from the cruiser screen beyond the horizon and coming confidently within gun range was promptly shot down. (My memory says that this happened twice to the same pilot who was rescued each time, but I think this unlikely to have happened). The attacks on the convoy by both high-level bombers and torpedo bombers were spectacular and exciting - the first naval action I had seen. A great curtain of fire went up from the merchant ships and the two A.A. ships, making our pom-pom and two machine guns seem very puny. Our 1918 breech-loading 4" gun was brought into action against the low flying groups of torpedo bombers. It was fascinating to see the torpedoes drop out of the aircraft - two or three each - into the water. Up on the bridge they were taking drastic avoiding action and having cancelled out a "hard a port" with a "hard a starboard" to avoid successive torpedoes, visible in the clear Arctic water.

In my action station aft by the pom-pom I drew the gunner's attention to a torpedo emerging from underneath our port side and he tracked it towards the convoy - there was a small explosion and he may have upset its course. The torpedoes were running deep for the heavily laden merchant ships and passed harmlessly beneath us. We emerged unscathed from these attacks except for Tinn, the trainer of our 4" gun who got a .303 machine gun bullet in the buttock from the wildly firing LEAMINGTON on our port beam. I saw the neat round hole a few days later and he was quite unperturbed about the whole thing.

We duly picked up signals from Admiralty about the movements of TIRPITZ and HIPPER; the withdrawal of our heavy cruiser force "to the westward with all speed; and the instructions to our destroyers to join them - finally, the "Scatter" signal which convinced us that the German ships were upon us. We picked our way through the dispersing ships and sought out our fellow "new boy" LOTUS who had been on the port bow of the convoy. I don't remember what was said or proposed but I do remember clearly what Godfrey Winn (aboard POZARICA) chose

to forget in his book PQ17, the signal which came from POZARICA to the corvettes "Screen me". She had only got a defensive asdic set and was apparently thinking of the U-boats in the vicinity. And so, complying with the Senior Officer's orders we formed a screen, LA MALOUINE having joined up, and headed north-east at POZARICA's maximum speed. Apprehensive glances were made towards the glaring horizon south-west where the enemy were expected. Then as Godfrey Winn relates, we met up with RATHLIN and adopted a line ahead formation to impress the imminently expected German surface ships.

More and more harrowing signals came from the dying ships of the convoy. LOTUS was not the only corvette anxious to go and help. We requested permission to leave POZARICA but Captain Lawford would not agree. LOTUS as senior escort officer was in a stronger position - he went, whether with Lawford's blessing or not I do not know. Boyd, our C.O. was only a Lieut. RNR, with his first command, hardly in a position to disregard a four-ring Captain RN. I can see Lawford's position too - with 300 souls on board a converted banana-boat, it would not be wise to break up the defensive unit formed by the A.A. guns of his ship, combined with the A/S potential of the corvettes - each without the other stood a lesser chance of survival in the circumstances prevailing.

We were very sick about his decision and tried to urge Boyd to go - but he would not and we again accused Lawford of saving his own skin before that of the convoy - unjustly so. The interminable daylight went on and on and it was wearying to one on the bridge at midnight to find the sun still shining and at 0400 the same - and the forenoon and the afternoon. The merchant ship SAMUEL CHASE joined the company.

We closed the ice edge - fruitlessly chased a U-boat under it, firing a couple of 4" shells which fell short.

We eventually reached Matochkin Shar the narrow strait that divides the Novya Zemla islands. We found PALOMARES already there. Next we formed up a convoy of seventeen ships only to suffer its confused disintegration in the fog as we went down the coast of Novya Zemla watching out for ice. We reformed and set course towards the White Sea and a renewal of air attacks by high level bombers. POPPY was detailed for duty when the US merchant ship HOOZIER swung out of line with steam pouring from it and drifting astern. We stood by and in a very short space of time the survivors came over in their boat with luggage and provisions and were helped aboard. The Captain came up to the bridge and Boyd asked him what was the matter with his ship and he turned to his Engineer Officer and asked "What happened, Chief?" Apparently he didn't know what was wrong with his ship when he had given orders to abandon! The Chief Engineer explained that the engine room was damaged beyond repair by a near miss. (Our own Chief in later conversation with the man came to the conclusion that a steam pipe had broken and that was all that was wrong!)

Boyd tried to persuade the Captain to go back to his ship and see if repairs could be made as by now the steam cloud had ceased to come from HOOZIER - but he would not. To avoid leaving such a costly prize to drift, perhaps to the enemy coast, I was instructed to sink it with 4" gunfire. I was told where some tons of ammunition were stored and we blazed away hoping to blow it up, but although we peppered the hull with a good many holes and set a fire burning inside her we got nothing spectacular and left HOOZIER settling slowly down in the water.

Before we rejoined the convoy, which by now had disappeared over the horizon, some high-level bombers came over us, one of which I thought was low enough to have a crack at. I suppose that bombardment of HOOZIER had gone to my head a bit, for I omitted to ask the C.O.'s permission to open fire. I didn't get the trainer or layer to use sights but merely got them to raise the old gun with such un-nautical expressions as "Up a bit", "Right a bit", "Fire"! By this time the mouth of the barrel was near the wing of the bridge and the C.O. and company were as shattered as some of the canvas screens by the blast. Nothing to the blast which poured down on me afterwards from the C.O. wanting to know what the bloody hell I was up to. With some satisfaction I noticed the shell explode in front of the bomber, which sharply altered course away. I pointed this out to the C.O. who was not impressed and merely called it a waste of valuable ammunition on aircraft which had obviously dropped their bombs possibly on Archangel, (which we knew by radio was being bombed at the time) or on the convoy

over the horizon. Suitably abashed I sat and watched the next wave of bombers course slowly over, with POPPY holding a steady course at full speed. Fascinated I saw a single stick of three bombs fall from one aircraft and produce towering geysers of water on our port bow near enough to wet the foredeck. I didn't dare look the C.O. in the face.

We rejoined our little convoy and suffered further attacks and it was interesting to note the attitude of our HOOZIER guests. The U.S.N. Gunnery officer and his men asked what they could do to help us as we again went into action stations and they were gratefully allocated to ammunition hoists and supply numbers - the rest were 'survivors' and though they hadn't wetted their feet crossing from HOOZIER to us, they acted the part to the full for the rest of the voyage. Some of them were quite a strain on Anglo-American relations. Admittedly they had brought with them some welcome supplies of tinned food but we had to stop some of them, before they left us in Archangel, throwing what was left overboard rather than leave it behind for us. I think some of the seeds of misunderstanding about the scattering of PQ17 were already germinating then. Did you see some of the U.S. ships in the convoy sailing along with their lifeboats lowered down to the water's edge and some of the crew in them - waiting to be torpedoed? I don't think in the escorts, with always plenty to do, we fully realised the nerve wracking experience it must have been to plod on slowly in line with nothing to do but hope to survive.

AT ARCHANGEL

We spent from 11th July (my mother's birthday) till 15th September (my birthday) in North Russia until sufficient darkness gave a return convoy a chance and one of the nicest things was the sense of relief the first time the sun set properly.

Our runs ashore were interesting, though the terrain was so dreary - sawmills, vast rafts of timber on the river - wooden wharfs and warehouses and the smell of wood alcohol from the few vehicles around Molotovsk and Ekonomia - Archangel was more exciting - a variety show at the Bolshoi Theatre where the drab people in the audience came alive - the Intourist Hotel where we had a few very slow meals in Victorian surroundings the International Club where I remember Freddie Waine - one of our wardroom - playing some classical pieces on a grand piano to the delight of the locals - specially selected students. I remember an English speaking girl in charge of a small shooting gallery in the club who spoke to us about all manner of subjects - except the regime in Russia!

I remember seeing women moving in and out of an old and beautiful church which was being used as a communal kitchen. In Ekonomia or was it Molotovsk? We traded chocolate for purple berries which the children had picked somewhere - I think the berries were called yogada. We looked at a boy's English schoolbook - and stories and pictures were pure Dickens although set in the present. We observed the deference paid to the green-capped political police. Old men, women and children (largely all that was left of the civilian population), all got off the wooden planking which served as pavements on to the muddy roads. Needless to say there was no giving way when we met - blue caps and green caps edged past each other on the planks.

The expedition back to Novaya Zemlya with Commodore Dowding on board was fairly uneventful as I recall it. Except for POPPY running aground on some unrecorded rocks which the Admiralty chart hadn't bothered about. We had been closing the shore to put a boat down to go to talk to one of the merchant ship crews who were camped ashore - their ship was at anchor close in. While Number One was taking Commodore Dowding for talks, the C.O. cleared lower deck and we spent an anxious half hour rocking POPPY back and forth until, with everyone aft, and the engines going full astern we clawed ourselves off - doing the asdic dome a power of no good.

The few ships we could find were gathered together and with LOTUS as Senior Officer we formed up a small convoy and returned to the White Sea, being met by POZARICA to provide A.A. cover - the voyage was uneventful but in our absence there had been air raids on Archangel and it was thought that the Dvina river had been mined. So to my disgust, I was given a shake at 0200 and told to stream our LL sweep - I was minesweeping officer for my sins! Out went all the gear and

with LOTUS as our partner we duly swept the river ahead of the convoy. Needless to say we didn't detonate a single mine!

Back to our life alongside the timber wharf at Ekonomia - Divisions were held on Sundays, route marches were devised - I recall passing a very miscellaneous troop of Russian recruits - they were scraping the barrel for soldiers - and they sang as they marched - the first time I'd heard the later popularised "Song of the Plains".

Soccer - cricket - and a weird form of hockey, using a square wooden puck, in which Godfrey Winn took part - all these were played on the wooden planked quay - and a wide variety of hobbies flourished on board.

Food was getting scarce - all our efforts through the S.B.N.O. North Russia and the appropriate commissars came to nought and we existed on an interminable diet of corned beef and rice. Only once did the wardroom chef fool us that we'd got something different - he mashed the corned beef with tinned milk into a pale pink paste and froze it in the fridge into a kind of mousse.

Our Number One mounted an expedition to get some potatoes and several officers from the corvettes rowed down stream one night with muffled oars, dark jerseys and gym shoes to a field alongside the river which we'd previously reconnoitred. We knew it contained potatoes and we knew it was guarded by armed sentries who patrolled the dykes which kept the water out. We chose our time carefully - crawled over the dyke and down in among the potato plants. Keeping flat on our stomachs we wriggled down the rows burrowing in with our hands to get the potatoes without disturbing the plants. We stayed as long as we dared then scurried back to the boat with our spoils in a sack - not a great quantity of vegetables but Queen Elizabeth couldn't have enjoyed Raleigh's potatoes more.

Two events brought us some fresh (yak) meat, flour and green vegetables - the Dieppe landings and Churchill's visit to Stalin in Moscow when he was made aware of our plight.

Arrangements were made for POPPY to go to the Kola Inlet to collect and fit a new asdic dome. We embarked a number of thin pale survivors of previous convoys, who had been recovering in Russian hospitals, awaiting transfer to U.K. bound ships - MARNE, MARTIN and MIDDLETON - some of the Navy's fastest destroyers who were bringing ammunition for PQ17 escort's eventual return voyages. They were also to escort U.S.S. TUSCALOOSA into Kola Inlet to pick up as many survivors as possible and escort her back to U.K. at top speed.

We reached the Kola Inlet without incident - though feeling very much alone as we ploughed up the White Sea at our top speed - 14 knots. There was time for a football match while the new dome was fitted. We played a team from the destroyers BLANKNEY and CHILTERN (I think!) By half time we were losing; then came an air attack from the nearby Finnish border and a few bombs were dropped rather ineffectually amongst the ships and dockyard. The teams agreed to go on playing - and we won.

Our return to Archangel was marked by the burial at sea of a rating from CHILTERN which we undertook to do.

Then followed another period of waiting in the warm, sultry, gnat infested atmosphere of the Dvina River - a regatta - rowing - sailing - swimming, relieved the monotony and we went to Solambula dockyard for some minor engine room repairs. Our allies, fearful of revealing the secrets of this dreary place to the 'foreigners' slapped a large, female sentry on the gangway as soon as we tied up - and she obviously meant business. When two or three of us tried to go ashore for a look round there was no mistaking the determined "Neit" and the bayonet flashed under our noses.

HOMeward BOUND

At last, rumours grew into positive signals and we learnt that PQ18 was on its way and we were to prepare for the homeward voyage. The corvettes did some stocktaking over stores and ammunition and pooled the resources:- some depth-charges to that one, some 4" shells to that, a few tins of milk and beef and a bag or two of rice changed hands. We sailed, with some survivors embarked in each escort - on 15th September, a few backward glances at our strange resting place - farewells to the Fleet Sweepers who were only seeing us part way before returning to their winter stint in North Russia and many twinges of apprehension as to what lay ahead - particularly when we read the signals emanating from PQ18 as it fought its way through. We were staggered when the heavy escort joined our

convoy of empty merchantmen, the survivors of a number of PQ convoys gathered together under the label QP14.

Admiral Burnett flying his flag in the cruiser SCYLLA assumed command and disposed the escort carrier AVENGER, the A.A. ship ALYNBANK and some twenty fleet destroyers around our flock. So together with POZARICA and PALOMARES, some fleet sweepers and the corvettes and trawlers we presented a formidable force to the enemy.

They were not deterred and we lost the Commodore ship, the sweeper LEDA and the Tribal class destroyer ASHANTI to U-boat attacks - no aircraft appeared. We sighted Jan Mayen Island and Spitzbergen en route.

LOTUS and DIANELLA went to the Port of London, POPPY called into Londonderry for mail and an unexpected visit from the Senior Officer Northern Ireland, then on to Cardiff's Mount Stuart Drydock Co., for a refit. Destore, de-ammunition and I was off on leave on 2nd October - my father's birthday.

DENIS C BROOKE,
Sub.Lieut RNVR
POPPY.

.....

PQ17 THROUGH THE EYES OF A SUBMARINER

When I was first asked if I would write a few lines about the notorious convoy PQ17, my first thoughts were "What hasn't been written by people with far more material to call upon, to aid their memories, than I have?" Also, the fact that I was in company who were celebrating Dick's M.B.E. with 'Woods 100 proof', may have helped me agree to try to emulate C.S. Forrester!!!!

So, to those of you who experienced the 'pleasures' of the cruises to Russia, courtesy of H.M. Grey Funnel Line all those years ago, I say, I appreciate that you know all about it, so forgive me". To those who didn't "Count your blessings".

Early 1942 - I was a young P.O.S.T. on the submarine depot ship FORTH in Holy Loch, Dunoon, on the Clyde. Sadly I 'Fell Foul' of the O.O.W. and, to avoid losing my Rate, the Regulating Coxswain gave me a 'Pier Head Jump' to H.M.S/m P614. This was one of four submarines built for Turkey, and with P615 (later lost with all hands) retained for service with our submarine service. They were ghastly 'boats'.

Within minutes of getting down the boat, our captain, Lieut. J. Beckley R.N., took us out, we did a patrol and finished up in Iceland, where a convoy was being assembled. We, P614, tied up alongside (I think) POZARICA, topped up, with fuel and water and set forth as escort for what was designated Convoy PQ17.

Our job with P615 was close escort, in case any major German units emerged. Contary to most notions, we did the whole trip on the surface, except when during the latter part of the voyage, we were so 'iced-up' that we were in danger of not being able to dive, due to the Kingston Valves (Diving vent valves) icing-up. We then for a short while dived to melt the ice, then belted after the convoy and resumed station, making signals to all and sundry to say that we were a jolly little British submarine, and not a horrible German U-boat.

Conditions on a small submarine are, at the best of times unsocial, and not for the squeamish, but P614, being built to Turkish specifications, was in a class of it's own. Obviously the brain-child of a deranged sanitary engineer. As I recall, we carried 800 gallons of water for everything. (Well, everything was cooking and living). My last wash was aboard FORTH, my next was weeks later. Kit - was what I stood up in, plus an extra S/m sweater, a pair of overalls and that was it, thanks to my Pier Head Jump.

Because I was excess to complement I kipped down where ever possible, occasionally 'hot-bunking' if some one else was on watch. Being young I suppose we took the situation in our stride. What did concentrate our thoughts was the regular loss of ships and knowing that we could not help. A body in those waters could expect a merciful end in a very few minutes.

Of course, few on board, if any, knew of the drama that was then unfolding, or the awful outcome that was to befall PQ17. P615 was ordered to patrol to the south, nearer North Cape.

Two Russian submarines were also in this area. Further to the west STURGEON (Lieut.M.R.G. Wingfield) was patrolling off Northern Norway.

Having taken my watches as lookout I began to accept the lessening number of merchant ships each time I was 'up-top', but as I recall, it got worse as the days went by. I was down below when the 'Scatter' signal was received, so I cannot visualise the scene. Suffice to say that when next I was up on the bridge it was to realise I was on a very small submarine, all alone in a very rough, very large, and awfully cold ocean, and having to accept that 'something' had gone wrong. History shows just how few made their way to Russia. P614 eventually picked up a convoy of 'empties', and set off for home. Again, more losses, but not so bad!!

Because of desperate fuel shortage we were diverted to Scapa Flow instead of going round to the Clyde. We 'borrowed' a cutter from somewhere and in a pea-souper fog I was ordered to set off with as near a gang of pirates as you ever saw to the depot ship, I cannot remember her name (TYNE? Ed.) for emergency rations to tide us over. Only to fall foul of the two-ring, wavy navy, O.O.W. He said something about "How dare you come here in that filthy state?" "With men, dressed like that"!!

I agree that "That" only needed a couple of wooden legs, a black patch or two and a parrot, for Long John Silver to have been proud of us. O.K. we were dirty, we did smell, we were not 'pusser', but that's life in the boats! Next question, "What do you want and where have you come from"? Meaning, I suppose, which of His Majesty's are you currently serving on? Foolishly, I forgot the "Sir" and replied "Food, please, we've just called in on our way from Russia".

Peering at some of the boys, and then down at our cutter tied up at the gangway, the O.O.W. hesitated, and said, "Oh no, not in that". To which I replied, "Certainly not sir, we were in a little submarine built for Turkey". Result - utter confusion. Eventually, sanity returned, we got our stores and somehow found our way back to P614 in the fog. Because of the time we had been away, rowing (??) half round the fleet anchorage, plaintively asking each ship as it appeared out of the fog, "Please, where is P614"? You can imagine some of the answers we got. Lieut Beckley asked for an explanation. So, I told him, in detail. All he said was, "Oh God! not again! have you got a thing about O.O.Ws?"

The following day, having refuelled and taken on water, we went round to the Clyde and 'home' to FORTH. Exactly half-an-hour after we had tied up, the pipe, "Liberty Boat for P614, in 15 minutes"....so, wipe the face, hands and wrists, on clean shirt, down to the liberty boat, and away to Liverpool and home. While in the bath, father decides to burn my singlet and underpants! Well I had not washed or changed for just over six weeks, so I couldn't complain.

Those, dear readers, are experiences I would wish to relive, but as we get older and perhaps wiser, I wonder if I could stand the strain.

I am one of the lucky ones, I often think of the many brave men who sadly did not make it home after that 'Last Trip'. We cannot, we should not, forget them.

GEORGE LUCK.
ex-P614 & TAURUS.

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RESCUE SHIP "ZAMALEK"

The Rescue Ship ZAMALEK, under Captain Owen Morris had a notable career on the Arctic Run. She rescued more than 150 seamen during PQ17 and 85 on the voyage home. She did a further nine return convoys to Russia and in all completed 64 convoys to various destinations. Her total of 654 lives saved was a record in the annals of the rescue ships - and worthy of mention in this PQ17 Remembrance edition of Northern Light.

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THE MURMANSK AND ARCHANGEL, RUSSIA RUN

Excerpts from "THE POINTER" magazine of the U.S.N. Armed Guard.

"In Convoy PQ17, over three fourths of all merchant ships in the convoy were sunk due to the fact that the escorts were called away on July 4, 1942 to meet the larger ships of the German Navy and left the merchant ships at the mercy of the submarines and airplanes of the enemy. The Armed Guard shot down eight of the German planes but CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT and WILLIAM HOOPER were sunk by torpedoes. (Editor's note: these two ships with NAVARINO were sunk before the 'Scatter' signal). The Armed Guard gun crew on DANIEL MORGAN fired at and hit a torpedo only 20 yards from CARLTON and saving that ship, to sink another day. On July 5, after being at general quarters for over 18 hours, the DANIEL MORGAN crew witnessed the sinking of FAIRFIELD CITY by bombs. They shot down two planes of the five that attacked her with bombs and was so damaged by the bombs that she too, sank.

The crew from WASHINGTON spent 10 days in their lifeboats. After seven cold days, they went ashore on Novaya Zemlya and had "Seagull Soup". Further down the coast, two days later, they snared 100 helldiver ducks and had a feast with the survivors of a British ship. They came across the WINSTON-SALEM grounded on a sand bar and had their first good meal in 10 days. One third had frozen feet before they reached Archangel on July 24. Many of them survived the sinking and came back on other ships. Some of these were sunk again and unfortunately some of these men were killed as these ships were hit. Thirty-one CARLTON survivors and five from HONOMU fell prisoner-of-war victims to the Germans, and were liberated in 1945.

Above excerpts printed with approval.

"UNsung HEROES"

Excerpts from the book by Justin F. Gleichauf

.....CHRISTOPHER NEWTON was finished off by the guns of an escort. About three hours later WILLIAM HOOPER, another of the new Liberty ships, was hit in the engine room, despite evasive maneuvering. Captain Edward L. Graves later reported that the ship was hit by a torpedo from a Ju88, and it wrecked the starboard boiler. The explosion blew the engine up through the stack. The naval armed guard, under Lieut. Brian Welch, remained at their positions, and Welch reported that the two after gunners continued to fire at the plane after the ship was hit. Welch attempted to get to his cabin to destroy classified papers, but smoke and flame in the passageway prevented that. He waited until he saw his men off the ship before climbing into a boat. Picked up by the rescue ship RATHLIN, he observed a British destroyer shelling WILLIAM HOOPER from close by. Welch warned the captain of RATHLIN that WILLIAM HOOPER was carrying several hundred tons of ammunition, and a signal was sent to the destroyer to pull away.

Seventeen-year old Kenneth E Clasen, was one of the ten-man navy gun crew aboard the 1919 freighter PAN KRAFT, carrying a load of aircraft parts and a deck load of bombers. After the convoy was ordered to scatter, PAN KRAFT veered north and hugged the ice-pack, but it was spotted by seven Ju88 dive-bombers, and was vigorously attacked. In spite of a good defence, the ship was hit by three bombs, one of which ruptured the steam and oil lines. When the order to abandon ship was given, Clasen found himself in a 25-foot lifeboat with fourteen others. He picks up the story:

"After a couple of hours, we were picked up by LOTUS. We were taken to Novaya Zemlya, but on the way, the captain picked up still more survivors from a couple of other ships that were sunk. He wasn't supposed to do this, but the captain was a former merchant sailor, and he decided to take a chance.

"Once aboard the corvette, they gave us all a good shot of British rum. After only catnapping for five days, coupled with the rum, I went out like the lights. I was put in a bunk right under a 4-inch AA gun and when some German planes came in they opened fire. I knew nothing about it at all, and when I woke up they told me I had slept right through an air raid.

"Later in Archangel, the Navy men were transferred to a schoolhouse where we slept on straw. I couldn't eat the fish they gave us, only black bread, dried oats and barley. I lost about 50 pounds. I had no shoes and it took weeks before I could obtain a pair of boots from the Russians, although there were piles of them offloaded from our ships, rotting there....." Clasen and the others were "stuck" in Russia until the end of August. At that time they were taken to Murmansk by British destroyer for further transfer to USS PHILADELPHIA, a heavy cruiser that took them to Iceland, where they were again transferred to USS TUSCALOOSA, which brought them back to Norfolk on September 10, 1942.

On 6 July, U255, which made the original sighting of PQ17, sank the Liberty ship JOHN WITHERSPOON, the second torpedo breaking her in two. The submarine surfaced and asked for the master; the U-boat commander offered food and water, and gave direction to the nearest land.....The next day, ALCOA RANGER, which had been fitted with two World War I vintage .45-cal AA guns prior to joining PQ17, was torpedoed by U255. Radio Operator William L Smith reported that the submarine surfaced, asked about name, destination, and cargo, and inquired if survivors had sufficient food and water in the boats, and gave directions to land.....OLOPANA was attacked by nine Junkers and subsequently sunk by U255, which seemed to be all over the area.. The submarine again surfaced and the commander inquired if the survivors had enough food and water, and gave course to land, before shelling and sending OLOPANA to the bottom.

There is no accurate figure of total casualties available. The number of open boats and rafts on the Barents Sea, after the demolition of PQ17, was over fifty. Captain S.B. Frankel, USN, reported 1,300 survivors were estimated to have reached Russia, including 500 from U.S. vessels. These numbers also included the US Armed Guards aboard the merchantmen. The toll taken by exposure and frostbite was ghastly. Gangrene cost many survivors' limbs; one young American seaman lost both legs and all his fingers, except his right thumb and a couple of stubs on his left. Such mutilation was not uncommon, and the stench of gangrene in the hospital was vividly described by Radio Operator Smith of ALCOA RANGER. He reported, "We had many men aboard on return with loss of both arms and some with loss of one or both legs".

"U255"

U255, mentioned above, was commanded by Captain Reinhart Reche. The submarine was known as "Fox Boat". She was on her first patrol at the time of PQ17 and scored four 'kills' - JOHN WITHERSPOON, OLOPANA, PAULUS POTTER and ALCOA RANGER, with a total tonnage of 25,544 GRT. With her skilled crew she eventually fought under three COs in the Arctic, later in the Atlantic. Captain Reche, who was noted for his assistance to survivors in lifeboats, ended the war in Narvik, until at the end the six remaining U-boats on patrol went to England under escort. After the war he became a high ranking NATO naval officer.

Much has been written about the tragedy of PQ17, but perhaps the best commentary on it was by Lieutenant John E Sexton, USNR, of SAMUEL CASE. "SOME EVENTS REMAIN WITH US FOREVER. I DON'T THINK I WILL EVER FORGET THE MOMENT WE WERE TOLD TO SCATTER. WHEN WE SAW THE SIGNAL FROM THE COMMODORE AND CHECKED THE SIGNAL BOOK FOR ITS MEANING, THE CAPTAIN AND OTHER OFFICERS ON THE BRIDGE COULD NOT BELIEVE IT. HOW COULD THEY DESERT US? IT WAS A FEELING OF UTTER HOPELESSNESS. 'SCATTER,' BUT WHERE, WHAT COURSE, RETURN TO THE WEST OR PRESS ON TO THE EASTWARD? WE HAD BEEN AT G.Q. FOR ALMOST 24 HOURS, AND IT TOOK SOME DOING TO COLLECT OURSELVES. I HAVE ALSO HEARD OF THE (BITTER) FEELINGS OF THE MEN ON THE ESCORT VESSELS".

S.S. OLOPANA

I was an Army Maritime Gunner and I joined the United States ship OLOPANA at the Tail o' the Bank. We were armed with four twin .303 Merlin guns (1918 vintage) as well as the Lewis gun that we carried from ship to ship. There were two D.E.M.S. ratings and my 'oppo', a Welshman, Gunner Owen.

We arrived in Iceland and became part of PQ17. After the convoy scattered we made for the ice-pack, where we came upon lifeboats from WASHINGTON, BOLTON CASTLE and PAULUS POTTER. We stopped and asked them if they wanted to come aboard. But they all said "No", not that I blame them as they had come through the mill. We gave them supplies and left. I think that was on 5th July. After a bit of excitement we were tin-fished at night on 7th. The starboard boat was wrecked and the port one was cut away, we also lost one raft. We got away on the remaining three rafts and we lost six men, my 'oppo' amongst them. I met one of the D.E.M.S. lads last year, after 49 years - he is a club member.

The rafts drifted apart and we were washed ashore on Novaya Zemlya on the 11th July. We made a fire and then we found a lifeboat washed ashore from the HARTLEBURY, so we had something to eat. After a walk we came on the WINSTON SALEM, a U.S. ship that had been run ashore. The skipper had lost his nerve.

We were picked up by a Russian Catalina and flown to join EMPIRE TIDE in Moeller Bay and we arrived in Archangel on 24th July - seventeen days after being torpedoed. After a month there, I was put on SEAGULL and sailed for Vaenga where I transferred to the destroyer ONSLAUGHT (GO4). We left on 29th August in company with MARNE, MARTIN, TUSCALOOSA and WASHINGTON, all full of survivors.

During the passage home we were put on lookout for a German minelayer ULM which was sunk. Fifty-three of the crew were picked up including the captain and six officers. We completed our voyage at Scapa and the Americans went on to Greenock.

That's a bit of my story - I'll never forget PQ17 - I guess I was one of the lucky ones.

TED HENNESSEY.
Memb N° 617.

.....
ASHORE IN POLYARNOE DURING PQ17

As for memories of PQ17, well, it was something none of us will ever forget. Even though based ashore, we still felt the terrible sense of disaster in Polyarnoe, as each day in the Coding Office there, signals came through telling of more ships lost, fresh attacks, survivors picked up, then when they landed, doing what we could to help, re clothing, fags, etc. It all seemed an almighty disaster, and to this day we must wonder if that fateful word "SCATTER" to the convoy and escort was a huge mistake. In hindsight one still wonders and I am not entirely convinced of that awesome decision.

BILL JOHNSTON.
Memb. N° 40.

.....
SIGNALS

.....Later on that day we eavesdropped upon an exchange as the convoy entered the zone of the Barents Sea where surface attack seemed likely. The Senior Officer of one of the two Royal Navy submarines taking passage in the middle of the convoy signalled to the Senior Officer Escorts in KEPPEL: "IN THE EVENT OF ATTACK BY HEAVY SURFACE FORCES PROPOSE TO REMAIN ON SURFACE" Commander Jack Broome in KEPPEL promptly and typically replied: "SO DO I!"

Clearly when Jolly Jack Tar is on tenterhooks a sense of humour is seldom absent.

JOHN BEARDMORE.
Memb. N° 235.
.....

"PQ17 - THROUGH THE EYES OF THE COMMANDER OF THE SOVIET NORTHERN FLEET

Excerpts from "With the Fleet" by Admiral Arseni Golovko.

(With permission of Progress Publishers)

July 3. Yesterday and the day before the Luftwaffe undertook several raids on Murmansk. The fires that raged after the night raid the day before yesterday devoured everything that survived preceding fires. Practically the whole of the city has been destroyed.....The berths and the railway are in working condition. Therefore, the port has not lost its value.

July 4. The Black Sea Fleet has abandoned Sevastopol. They fought with distinguished valour.....We admire their heroic deeds. Many good words will be written about them. But today our hearts bleed.....No news about PQ17. No news is not yet a sign of something bad.

July 7. The worst expectations have been confirmed. After departing from Iceland PQ17 had sailed fairly until July 4. So had PQ13 sailing from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk to Iceland, Great Britain and the U.S.A. The tragedy began on July 4... A dark, grim, absolutely inexcusable and unjustifiable tragedy. As a result, the enemy submarines and the Luftwaffe destroyed 23 out of the 34 transport vessels with 122,000 tons of cargo out of a total of 188,000 tons. Hundreds of human lives were lost.....The reason why the convoy was wiped out will become fully known after the war.

.....Having received a message from their intelligence on the sailing of the Nazi fleet from its bases in Norway the British Admiralty ordered the commodore of the convoy at 2300 hours to disperse the ships so that they should proceed to Soviet ports independently, as they saw fit, without escort. In other words, the order meant in plain language: "Save your own skins!" The order was executed with strange and surprising haste.....And now it would be appropriate to ask the question: was not the British Admiralty in too great a hurry to order the British destroyers to abandon the convoy and the transport vessels to disperse and to proceed to their ports of destination independently?.....Alas, we learnt about the British Admiralty's order when it was already too late, when the convoy had dispersed and many of the unprotected transport vessels had already fallen victim to Nazi U-boats and Luftwaffe torpedo bombers.

In the account of PQ17 the case of the US steamship WINSTON-SALEM is of special interest. Colonel I.P. Mazuruk, commander of the Northern Air Detachment, has just reported it to me - it is scandalous to put it mildly....."Executing a flight along the shore of Novaya Zemlya, Mazuruk discovered an ocean-going transport ship on the roads in the southern part of Moller Bay opposite the Litke Inlet. Touching down near it he found that the transport had been abandoned by the crew. The huge, fully loaded vessel was intact, though it was touching a sandbank with the bows. However, the breechblocks of the guns and the bolts of the machine guns were missing. Then the Soviet flyers saw several tents ashore. They established that the entire crew of the abandoned vessel - the US steamship WINSTON-SALEM - were in the tents.

A ship of PQ17, she had luckily avoided encounters with U-boats and Luftwaffe bombers, safely to reach Novaya Zemlya. She could have sailed southwards along the coast to the White Sea. However, the captain of WINSTON-SALEM did not wish to proceed to the port of destination - Arkhangelsk. He drew into the first harbour on the way and ran the ship aground. He ordered the gun and machine gun crews to remove the breechblocks and bolts and to throw them overboard. He allowed the crew to abandon the ship and to pitch camp ashore.

In terms of wartime usage this adds up to defiance of combat orders, cowardice and desertion with all eventual consequences.

Despite this, the captain of WINSTON-SALEM behaved arrogantly. He demanded that our pilots bring a representative of the Soviet government to his presence. Mazuruk produced his badge of member of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

The captain bluntly demanded a seat on a plane to proceed to the USA. he refused to refloat his ship and to navigate her to the port of destination. Brushing

aside all exhortations and arguments this shameless "businessman" declared he was not the least concerned about the ship or her cargo, because he had already brought them to the first Soviet port. He regarded the empty harbour of an Arctic island a thousand miles away from the nearest railway as a port. What sort of ally was he? And at a time like this, when we were resisting another enemy onslaught in the direction of the Caucasus and Stalingrad!

We shall not, of course, judge about all Americans by the captain of the WINSTON -SALEM, a man without honour. Nor can we identify the friendly feelings of the overwhelming majority of the British people with the policy that governs the actions of the British Admiralty. But it appears that these actions have pre-determined the fate of PQ17 and the decision delaying the departure of PQ18 from British ports. I have just been informed of this decision by Rear-Admiral Fisher, Senior British Naval Officer at Polyarnoye, who has replaced Rear-Admiral Bevan. He told me that a meeting was held in London on July 17. Following this meeting the Naval Mission had received a signal on the suspension of all convoys to USSR till September.

I made an effort to restrain myself, not to speak my mind to Rear-Admiral Fisher, recently captain of the battleship BARHAM, a merited old salt and, as I see it, a man remote from political intrigue. What I felt like saying was:

"Admiral, as you yourself see, we are fighting the war for what we are worth, and we are honestly fulfilling our pledges. Then why do you, our allies, expose to mortal danger thousands of people who trust you, your own sailors above all? Why do you sacrifice their lives in pursuit of secret interests and political calculations which are infinitely remote from our common goal in the war against Hitlerism?....."

.....I know that these questions will remain unanswered. And it is not for Rear-Admiral Fisher to answer them. It is beyond the official competence of the Senior British Naval Officer. And he would not engage in a heart-to-heart talk. Besides, how can he explain the moves of the British Admiralty?... After the rout of PQ17 he turns his eyes away and blushes (yes, blushes) every time I see him. And usually he tries to avoid me.

.....



A macabre sight - the iced-over remains of a German plane shot down on a previous convoy. Now floating about the Arctic wastes like some ghostly "Marie Celeste". (She probably crash landed on an ice-floe)

S.S. EARLSTON

SEVEN DAYS IN A LIFEBOAT

5th JULY. 3.00pm. Abandoned ship. Engine-room flooded. Steam pipes smashed. 3.30pm. Captain taken prisoner and put aboard U-boat. Two lifeboats and jolly-boat proceeding in company. 11.00pm. Dense fog. Lost sight of Chief Officer's boat. Gentle breezes, slight swell. 33 persons in my boat.

6th JULY. Light southerly wind, smooth sea. 3.00am. Found abandoned jolly-boat. 11.00am. Contacted Chief Officer's boat. Excellent spirits prevail, indulged in good sing-song. 0100. Rowing steadily, singing continues. Pumping at 4-hour intervals, boat making very little water. Food rationed. 03.15. Now 24 hours in boat. 18.00. Lost sight of Chief Officer's boat. Watches set, 10 men in each watch, continue easy rowing. Light S.W. wind, choppy sea, course South True.

7th July. Proceeding at fair speed, rowing for 40 minutes per hour. Val and myself taking 4 hours on and 4 hours off at the tiller and sheet. Mr. Watson at pump. Light westerly breeze and smooth sea. 0200. Tot of Rum each, corned beef and biscuits. 0800 Water issue. Rowing continues, gentle breeze, smooth sea, wind very cold. 1600 Shifted pump to more accessible position. 2015 Down sail, wind South, course South, proceeding under oars only. All aboard are quite happy. 2030 Slight drizzle set in. Now 48 hours in boat. Weather deteriorating; wind increasing in force. Very bad night.

8th July. Fine and clear. Very, strong wind. Moderate sea, boat very jumpy. 1530 Now 3 days in boat. Course S.S.E. Close hauled. Midnight fine and clear. Light Southerly wind. Moderate swell.

9th July. Course South True. Tried Brandy and condensed milk mixed with small drop of water. (V.G. unanimous decision). Spirits high this morning. Gentle breeze. Moderate Southerly swell, not much way. Noon. North -easterly breeze sprung up. Running free, due South. Great excitement, sighted two objects astern on horizon, rising fast. What are they? 1230 Now we know - BOLTON CASTLE's lifeboats, one in tow of the other. Spoke to us - making for Murmansk, judges himself to be 170 miles North of it. All hands considerably heartened. Wind freshening from S.E., close hauled South tack making about S.S.W.

10th July. 3 men suffering from swollen legs, used massage oil. Continue S.S.W. Strong wind, high confused sea, not making much headway. Lookouts kept. Folwell, Holman and Hopper taking alternate helms.

11th July. 3 more men down with swollen legs, one with frostbite. All hands had their feet massaged except Vincent. Afternoon weather moderating.

12th July. Fine morning. Light breeze. Moderate following sea. Heading S.W. close hauled port tack. Must have set eastward considerably, no land sighted yet. 0500 Land sighted fine on port bow. Thank God, we all say. Val sighted it. Moderate Easterly swell. Light wind. Sighted bay - making for it, close hauled port tack. Volunteers for oars to help make bay. Rabache Penula. 1400 Grounded on beach, met by Russian soldiers. Mr Watson of great use as interpreter. Find ourselves right on front line and given excellent reception. Several are suffering with sore ankles and feet. At community hall at the front. Given an excellent feed and right royally entertained. Again Mr Watson of invaluable assistance in speaking language. 2000 taken by lorry to front line hospital, on arrival casualties attended to and put to bed. Others bathed and given meal (excellent fish and maccaroni, coffee, bread and butter). Oh! boy, wasn't it good.

13th July. 0300 and so we went to bed. All are now snugly turned in and judging by the snores are doing themselves justice. 0800 Roused and told to

get ready for the road in one hour. We washed and had breakfast, most feeling fairly well. 0945 Got into lorries and commenced journey to join hospital ship. 1150 First lorry arrived at ship. 1255 Arrived at Polyarnoe and admitted to hospital

15th July. Discharged from hospital and taken to camp at Vaenga.

Signed D.M.L. Evans 2nd Officer.
Andrew V. Watt Senior Cadet.

Submitted to Northern Light by Andrew Watt, N° 817.

S.S. BOLTON CASTLE

.....during this attack the first ship hit was the Russian tanker AZERBAIJAN, she burned fiercely was abandoned, then reboarded and the fire was put out. She eventually made port under her own steam. Another vessel that was sunk on 4th July was a freighter of about seven thousand tons, she drifted astern of the convoy, stern towards us, sinking by the stern. For some unknown reason her anchor had been dropped and there was someone hanging on to the cable about two-thirds of the way up. When we survivors met up in Russia I asked who it was hanging on to the anchor chain and I was told it was the chief steward and he was sozzled. I wonder if anyone can remember this. I wouldn't swear to the name of the ship. (Editor's note: The contributor says it could have been CARLTON. But, CARLTON was not torpedoed until the following day).

On my first day in the camp at Vaenga, a chap suggested I went with him, out on to the hill. His reason was that the Bosche bombed the area every day. As we walked through the camp gates the first aircraft arrived. We sat under a silver birch sapling, as the Ju88 passed over us a Hurricane with Red Stars on the wings flew under it. It fired one short burst into its starboard engine which exploded in flames and gradually lost height. Then Russian girl-soldiers fixed bayonets and went after the plane's crew. We never learned if they got to them, but I understand they didn't take any prisoners.

In the room where we slept there was a continuous plank running the length of the building and outside the door there was a Russian guard on duty. I don't know why he was there. He had his leg in plaster and one arm in a sling, so I think he must have been wounded at the front. There was a 40 gallon drum outside the door with a notice above it saying "Boil This Water Before Drinking". I never saw anyone drink it except the guard and he used to drink it straight out of the drum.

When we left Vaenga for Archangel, some went by train and some by sea. The party that went by rail were issued with rifles and ammunition but luckily they didn't meet any German patrols. I went on the HEMATRIS, a merchant ship that had been torpedoed in a previous convoy and then badly bombed in Murmansk. She had been loaded with pit-props to keep her afloat. On board with me was the padre from H.M.S. EDINBURGH. None of us had any privileges on board, we were given one blanket and a lifebelt and we just dossed down on the deck and that included the padre. When we arrived at Archangel we transferred to a wooden building where we joined survivors of EDINBURGH, GOSSAMER and PQ17 ships. The captain of GOSSAMER was in charge, assisted by the Navigating Officer of GOSSAMER, Medical Officer from EDINBURGH and the Padre. I believe the captain's name was Crees, and we came back to U.K. together in MARNE.

During an action against a German minelayer on the way home, I was on the Port Oerlikon and Captain Crees and his West Highland Terrier that had survived the sinking of GOSSAMER was on the Searchlight platform, so we had a good view. We had six men killed aft and we didn't know anything about it until a chap came staggering along the deck covered in blood. I remember there were some lads from Solumbala (Archangel), one was named Partridge and one Peacock! One chap with a beard came from Plymouth and his name was Ross, another - the writer on GOSSAMER - was a Frenchman.

We escorted the U.S.S. TUSCALOOSA back to Iceland. The crew of MARNE were a smashing crowd.

On arriving at Stromness, Admiral 'Nutty' Burnett was piped aboard and the captain and officers were lined up and he shook their hands. Then he caught sight of me in leather naval seaboots that hadn't been cleaned since we were sunk and a pair of Russian naval trousers and a tunic. He walked over to me and said "Are you a survivor?", I said "Yes, Sir". He shook my hand and added "Well done, go home and enjoy your leave, and come back for the next round" In a way I was very pleased, but I did feel scruffy!

We eventually arrived in Glasgow at about eight o'clock in the morning and we hadn't a penny amongst us and we had to wait until four o'clock in the afternoon for a train to our base at Lochwinnoch. Luckily one of the chaps owned a dye-works in Glasgow and he went to the bank, got some money and took us all for a meal. We didn't think much about it at the time but the American survivors were feted at the Town Hall and issued with new clothing.

I suppose I must be thankful, I did get three pounds ten shillings from the survivors fund to pay for the personal property I had lost, but I had had a shilling a week deducted from my pay, to pay in to the fund!

FRANK BROWN (DEMS)
S.S. BOLTON CASTLE

.....

A GALLEY BOY ABOARD R.F.A. ALDERSDALE - SUNDAY 5TH JULY 1942

I had just finished a large tub of spuds when the cook came out and told me the captain had said we could go anywhere on the ship. I thought that's nice of him, it will pass a boring Sunday afternoon. I only realised the implication of his remark when one hour later the ship was bombed by three Ju88s, and I found myself getting into a lifeboat. About half an hour later we were picked up by the SALAMANDER and made our way to Archangel via Novaya Zemlya.

My first contact with Russian women was in a shed converted into a shower room. Four large Russian girls waiting at the door told us to strip off completely. To my embarrassment they stayed with us, I need not have worried, as a skinny seventeen year old I didn't rate a second glance. We were then taken off to hospital for a week's sleep. One night some of the crew tried to go to the pictures in their pyjamas, but were chased by the Russian nurses and marched back to bed.

During the two month stay in Archangel dances were held at the International Club from 8.30 to 10.30, one night we went for our evening meal (black bread, fish and vodka) and were confronted by a notice on the dining room door stating that only officers would be served from 6.30 to 8.00. This did not go down well with the lower ranks as it meant the officers would be finished and away before we had even started, so ensuring a good chance of securing one of the girls as a partner, as the ratio was about ten girls to fifty men, this hardly seemed democratic. The American officers tried, unsuccessfully, to stop the lower ranks entering the dining room, where, once they were in, fighting broke out, vodka spilling everywhere, reminding me of a saloon fight in a John Wayne Movie. (Was it John Wayne or Tom Mix back in those days?? Editor.)

At the height of this melee Russian soldiers appeared and positioned themselves around the room, the fighting stopped immediately, you could hear a pin drop. The next day a notice was pinned on the dining room door stating that all survivors would eat at the same time!

Soon after this the Russians thought it was about time we earned our keep and fight with them on the Murmansk front. Thank God we sailed for home before this plan could be put into action.

We arrived home in Scotland and were met by a Petty Officer

who gave out chits for the journey down to London. A Salvation Army officer greeted us, taking us into a hut where we sat down to a wonderful roast meal. I shall never forget it. He then gave us a shilling for a bun and a cup of tea for the train journey - to me it was like gold dust. Covered in scabies, I didn't fancy pushing my way through the crowded YMCA, so I never did use the chit, but the Salvation Army shilling came in very handy and now, needless to say, I never pass their street collecting box without giving a donation.

RON WRIGHT,
Memb. N°1384.

.....
"SALAMANDER" and "ALDERSDALE"

When PQ17 scattered, SALAMANDER steamed flat out at her nearly 17 knots, with every rivet vibrating for a North Russian port. It wasn't long before we saw the Fleet Oiler ALDERSDALE being bombed and steered towards her to give any assistance we could. When we arrived we saw that she was slightly down by the stern having been straddled aft by a stick of bombs.

Her crew were taken off and the Chief Engineer said he couldn't re-start the engines but in an effort to save the ship it was decided to attempt to take her in tow. To this end a small party was put aboard and a wire rigged, but it soon became apparent that poor little "SALLY" could in no way tow an 8,000 ton plus oiler with 8,000 tons of fuel aboard, so the attempt was abandoned.

Our skipper then tried to sink ALDERSDALE. The 4" gun forward was made ready and the order given to fire but the gun jammed. The gun's crew were mostly active service ratings and the skipper a former gunnery officer, but with all their expertise the gun couldn't be unjammed. What next? The only other armament, apart from rifles, was Oerlikons and so these were brought to bear in the hope that some shells would pierce the plating and tracers would ignite the high octane fuel the oiler was carrying. The distance we were from her, if this part of the operation had gone according to plan, I'm sure we would have gone up, or down as the case may be, as well. The skipper was desperate to sink ALDERSDALE and in a last attempt he tried a pattern of well laid depth charges, but to no avail. (We always understood that our skipper's attempt to sink ALDERSDALE by depth charges originated in a film he had seen of a merchant ship hulk being keeled over by this method. A little different from a fully laden oiler). Reluctantly the oiler was abandoned and we set off again at a full gallop for Novaya Zemlya.

Other ships had the same idea and eventually a small group of escorts and merchantmen gathered in Matochkin Strait. After several top level conferences we sailed in convoy for our original destination, Archangel. The next day we ran into a field of ice-floes with visibility nil, and it was disconcerting to hear the ice-floes scraping along the ship's side. Eventually we came out of the all-pervading fog into brilliant sunshine but not another ship in sight. After swanning around for some hours and maintaining radio silence our skipper decided that the other ships must have come out of the fog ahead of us so we set off in the hope of overtaking them. This proved not to be the case as the subsequent SOS messages from these ships as they were bombed in the entrance to the White Sea showed they were a matter of twelve hours behind us.

When we arrived in Archangel we were instructed to oil and then to proceed in search of survivors from the sunken ships, and this despite the fact that there were other Royal Navy ships available from previous convoys who had been on station to act as local escort. Perhaps the Senior Officer responsible thought we should be made to pay for running away, something we most certainly had not wanted to do.

R.FOWKES,
Memb. N°1459.

.....



Photo Godfrey Winn Collection

IA MALOUINE in Matochkin Straits 7 July 1942. (A decade later this area became the locale for Soviet tests and was already a forbidden zone to Allied shipping. Probably the only photograph of Matochkin Straits ever taken by a Western European.

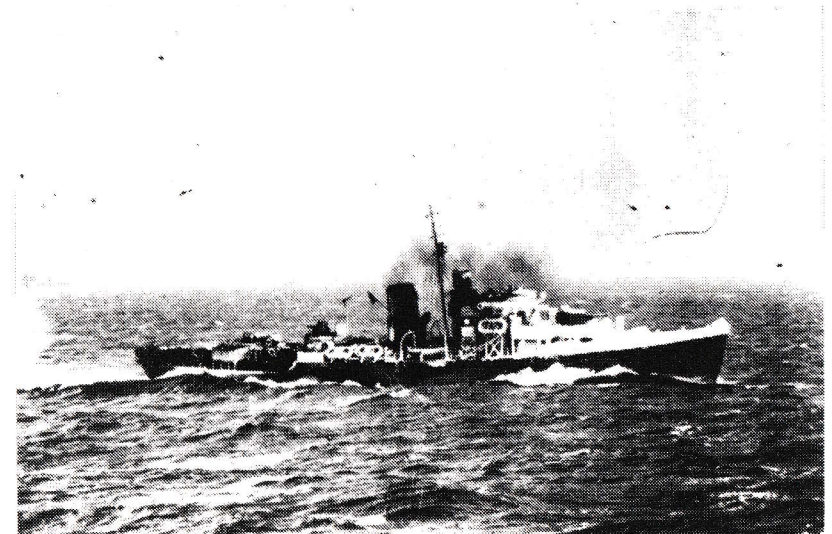


Photo John Riley.

Corvette LOUIS on Arctic Convoy - note icing on foremast.

TO H.M.S. "KEPPEL" (S.O. ESCORTS, PQ17)

We left her pathetically motionless on the beach at Barrow in Furness, she was shrouded in a mantle of patient resignation which surrounds like an aura of doom, a vessel that has run her predestined course.

But in memory now, even after fifty years, it seems as if she is still with us like an old trusted friend reaching out.

Remember the boilers, engines and turbines that never really failed us. The guns, the deck, the funnels; still bodies torn and blackened with oil, eyes stary with the direct gaze of death at the stars to where their souls had fled.

We feel the very spirit of the old ship is still here, voices of old ship-mates, the movement of the steel deck, the gentle heave as we left the shoreline behind.

Then the high crested combers followed by the biting gale. Clutch for the nearest hold, the high shuddering limb, the sickening plunge - bump - bump - bump as the bows ploughed a resistless way through the heart of a giant wave, green seas break in thunder over the bows and fo'c'sle and a screaming torrent rushes aft. Hour after hour, would it never end. No ship can take this, cold, hungry and fatigued, no human can endure this for long. Gradually the leaping seas flatten out, the fury was calming, there was time to look around. The old ship, like us, had taken a battering but she had brought us through, we loved her, she was the most beautiful ship afloat.

God! Action Stations, another type of battle, hell once again. But she brought us home in safety through storm and battle.

Farewell old girl "Farewell".

We your crew, Salute you.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

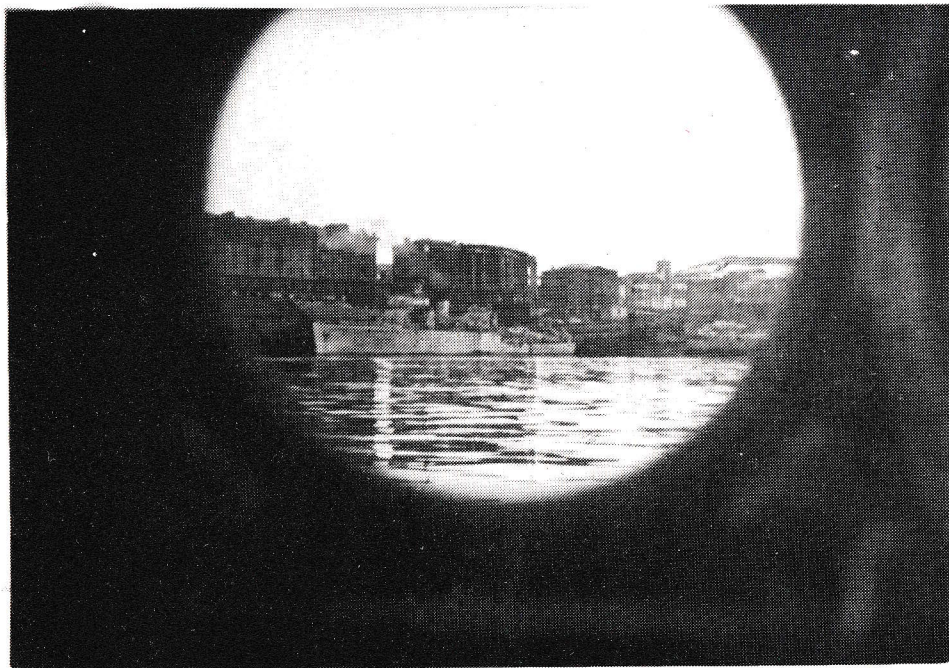
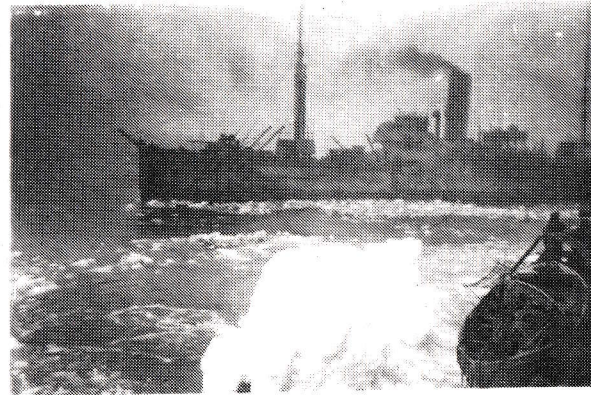
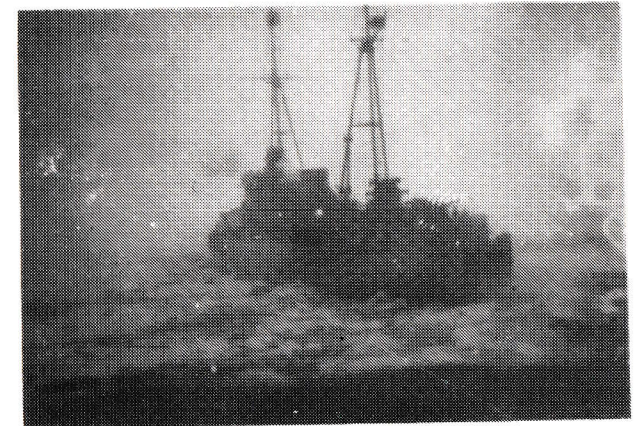


Photo Godfrey Winn Collection

Murmansk through the porthole - which Algerine is tied up alongside?



Nearly a collision in fog and ice with EL CAPTAN.



POZARICA in fog and ice during PQ17.



End of the voyage. Children waiting on the jetty Segorettes, Shokolad Mister?

Photos from Jack Seal.

"PQ17" - THE SUMMING UP.

Due to the self imposed silence on the subject of PQ17 by both the Admiralty and the Ministry of Information, extravagant accounts had spread like wildfire throughout the United States and in the press in neutral countries, of how the British Navy (the Limeys) had yellowed and ratted on the convoy, and left it to its appalling fate. Throughout the war nothing was done to contradict these stories which continued to spread, fermented by anti-British isolationists and some few returning embittered survivors who had been taken prisoner by the Germans. The Admiralty put out evasive statements without accepting any of the blame itself. PQ17 had become "Sub Judice" and it was not until twelve years after the war had ended (and long after the death of the First Sea Lord) when Admiral Tovey, who had been C in C Home Fleet at the time of PQ17, was allowed to publish his own despatches in the London Gazette, that the whole truth was finally told. The Admiralty's admission of error came too late to repair the hurt caused at the time, nor was it made sufficiently widely known to absolve those who took part.

WHO WAS TO BLAME? One can usually be wise after the event and the pros and cons of PQ17 have been chewed over in books, in naval wardrooms, in courts of justice and in the House of Lords, but most naval strategists still maintain that the main responsibility for the convoy's destruction must inevitably rest upon the shoulders of the men who prematurely sent the "Scatter" signal - the First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Admiral Sir Dudley Pound RN) and his advisors. There were, however several other important factors which also contributed to the disaster. These included:

- (1).The constant interference and over-ruling by Admiral Pound of proposals and decisions of the C in C Home Fleet (Tovey) in handling the situations at sea.
- (2).The Admiralty's concern over the preservation of its capital ships which seemed to many to be paramount over its concern for the preservation of the convoy, which some historians still think was needlessly sacrificed.
- (3).The Admiralty's reluctance to engage enemy surface ships east of Bear Island due to the proximity of Norwegian airfields, the problems of refuelling and for obvious tactical reasons
- (4).The complete absence of air cover to the convoy once it was east of Bear Island, as no aircraft carrier had sailed with the convoy.
- (5).The general lack of co-operation shewn by the Russians of the Northern Convoy route. They had promised but failed to bomb the enemy's airfields in Northern Norway, and were reluctant to provide more than token air cover, often not even that, as our convoys neared the Russian coast. Their escort vessels only came out for a days sailing to meet the convoys.
- (6).Hitler's trump card lay in the fact that while his capital ships remained in harbour, seaworthy but not at sea, a very large part of the British fleet was necessarily tied up at Scapa Flow, just in case the enemy should venture out. After the loss of BISMARCK Hitler became completely obsessed in avoiding damage to his capital ships especially by carrier borne aircraft. In addition to this, a false German reconnaissance report during the early passage of PQ17 had mistaken the cruisers LONDON and NORFOLK accompanying the convoy at a distance for two fleet carriers.

Finally Admiral Raeder who was anxious to attack the convoy at all costs had requested Hitler's permission to sail his battle fleet. The Fuehrer however had absented himself on manoeuvres on the Eastern Front and Raeder was powerless to act without Hitler's express authority to do so.

In the meantime the convoy had been prematurely scattered and fourteen ships had already been sunk, so the German operation "Knightsmove" (as it was called) became unnecessary and was cancelled. If British intelligence could even remotely have conceived Hitler's extreme reluctance to attack even with the cards stacked in his favour the story of PQ17 might well have been different.

JOHN BEARDMORE
Navigating Officer
H.M.S. POPPY.

.....

CONVOY QP13

From Naval Staff History BR1736 (44) (With permission)

The disastrous passage of Convoy PQ17 tended to throw into the background the fortunes of the westbound convoy, QP13. This convoy of 35 ships sailed in two parts from Archangel and Murmansk, joining up at sea on 28th June under Commodore N.H. Gale. Its escort consisted of five destroyers INGLEFIELD (Cmdr. A.G. West, S.O.), ACHATES, VOLUNTEER, INTREPID, and O.R.P. GARLAND; the A.A ship ALYNBANK; corvettes STARWORT, HONEYSUCKLE, HYDERABAD and T.F.S. ROSELYS; mine-sweepers NIGER and HUSSAR and two trawlers. The submarine TRIDENT accompanied the convoy as far west as 23°E and three Russian destroyers as far as 30°E.

Thick weather prevailed during most of the passage, but the convoy was reported by enemy aircraft on 30th June while still east of Bear Island and again on 2nd July. No attacks developed, however, and that afternoon Convoy PQ17 was passed, to which the enemy then transferred their attentions.

After an uneventful passage, Convoy QP13 divided off the north-east coast of Iceland on 4th July in compliance with directions from the Admiralty's signal 2246 B/2 July, Commodore Gale with 16 merchant ships turning south for Loch Ewe, while the remaining 19 ships continued round the north coast of Iceland for Reykjavik. Captain J. Hiss, Master of the U.S. ship AMERICAN ROBIN, was nominated as Commodore of this section on parting company. At 1900, 5th July, Captain Hiss formed in five columns and escorted by NIGER (Commander A.J. Cubison, S.O.) and HUSSAR, ROSELYS with trawlers LADY MADELEINE and ST ELSTON, (INGLEFIELD and INTREPID had detached on 5th to refuel at Seydisfiord), was approaching the north-west corner of Iceland. The weather was overcast, visibility about one mile; wind N.E., force 8, sea rough. No sights had been obtained since 1800, 2nd July, and the position was considerably in doubt.

At 1910, Commander Cubison suggested that the front of the convoy should be reduced to two columns in order to pass between Straumnes and the minefield to the north-west of Iceland. This was the first the Commodore had heard of the existence of the minefield.

Soon afterwards, Commander Cubison gave his estimated (by soundings) position at 2000 as 66°45'N., 22°22'W. and suggested altering course to 222° for Straumnes point at that time. This was done. About two hours later (2000), NIGER which had gone ahead to try and make a landfall, leaving HUSSAR as a visual link with the convoy, sighted what she took to be the northern cape bearing 150° one mile, and ordered the course of the convoy to be altered to 270°. Actually, what NIGER had sighted was a large iceberg, but this was not realised for some time; at 2240, she blew up and sank with heavy loss of life, including Commander Cubison. Five minutes later a last signal from her, explaining the mistaken landfall and recommending a return to course 222°, was handed to Captain Hiss. But it was too late; already explosions were occurring among the merchant ships. The westerly course had led straight into the minefield. Considerable confusion prevailed, some thinking a U-boat attack was in progress, others imagining a surface raider. Four ships were sunk - the American HYBERT, HEFFRON and MASSMAR and the Russian RODINA, and two were seriously damaged - the American JOHN RANDOLPH and Panamanian EXTERMINATOR. Good rescue work was carried out by the escorts, especially ROSELYS (Lieut. de Vaisseau A Berberet). Though he had correctly appreciated that the convoy was in the minefield, Lieutenant Bergeret remained in these highly dangerous waters for 6½ hours, during which time he picked up 179 survivors from various ships.

Meanwhile, HUSSAR, which had obtained a shore fix, led out the remaining merchant ships, which reformed on a southerly course, and in due course reached Reykjavik without further misadventure.

The Flag Officer, Iceland (Rear-Admiral Dalrymple-Hamilton) attributed this unfortunate occurrence to the change of plan, whereby a Commodore had to assume charge of a convoy, without full information of the conditions prevailing off the north-west coast of Iceland, i.e. the minefield, and the apparent absence of any concerted arrangement between the S.O., Escort and the Commodore as to what procedure should be adopted if land was not sighted when expected; to the thick weather, which prevented sights to be taken for three days before making land, and NIGER's unfortunate mistaking of ice for land, which dictated the alteration

of course that led directly into the minefield; to the unreliability of the radar sets in NIGER and HUSSAR; and to the absence of any navigational aid such as a DF Beacon to lead through the gap between the minefield and the shore.

Submitted by:
A.B.STANFORD
Honorary Member

.....
SOME REFLECTIONS ON QP13.

Not being superstitious (of course), nevertheless in retrospect I am glad I did not know the convoy number when we were sent from the Allied survivors camp at Murmansk to the ships about to depart her shores on 24 June 1942. The day was marked by very heavy air raids, the loss of GOSSAMER, and the unforgettable sight of the stark white chimneys of the destroyed city appearing like a cemetery full of grim tombstones.

When abandoning ship I had lost my boots, and some kind chap had given me a pair of hob-nailed army boots. These did not co-operate at all with the smooth steel decks I discovered to my dismay upon arriving aboard S.S. AMERICAN PRESS for repatriation. However, despite all our various problems there was not a man among the crowds of survivors who looked with regret on our imminent departure. Potential for disaster was, of course, present for every ship of the 35 in the convoy each crowded with at least one extra crew despite the escort of five destroyers, two minesweepers, two trawlers and two corvettes.

We departed Kola Inlet at 1615 hours 27 June and once clear of the coast, was quickly picked up by the usual Luftwaffe shadow. At first our luck held because all enemy units had been instructed to concentrate on northbound PQ17. We passed the latter at sea, hull down to the south and realised they were under attack (this being before they were ordered to scatter) as we had heard the distant concussion of bombs and depth charges. Although deploring our sister convoy's ordeal, everyone surely was secretly thankful someone else was being attacked.

Aside from U-boat alarms, distant Luftwaffe observer and passing through ice-fields and snow, all went well and on the evening of 4 July the convoy divided, 16 ships breaking off for the UK and the remainder continuing on for Iceland.

The following evening, 5 July land was reported in sight and with intense relief everyone heaved a collective sigh.....we were "safe" at last.

Off watch at 2100, the weather had become increasingly ugly with half a gale, heavy seas and very poor visibility. All ships were labouring heavily but especially the merchant vessels in ballast, when suddenly one of the crew burst in and shouted, "Get them on lads! They got one already!" and alarm bells went off at the same moment. By the time I had snatched my lifejacket, reached the main deck at N°.3 Hatch, and looked abeam to starboard close aboard all that could be seen of H.M.S.NIGER was her bow pointing straight at the lowering clouds as she slid under. This was a very personal tragedy, as I had shared rations with and knew well many of the crew during our involuntary prolonged sojourn in Murmansk.

Looking aft, I saw the convoy scattering badly with ships heading in all directions, S.S.HEGIRA narrowly missing collision as she crossed our stern. There was an enormous explosion on one of the Liberty ships (probably JOHN RANDOLPH), and at the same time a huge water spout rose between the Liberty and us like a bursting heavy calibre shell.

The master of AMERICAN PRESS decided to depart the area immediately and HEGIRA fell in astern. Every man was certain we were under attack by both U-boats and surface vessels, as we headed for the nearest port, Akureryi in Iceland, and the convoy chaos was quickly swallowed up in the poor visibility, as the Chief cracked on every revolution he could squeeze out of the ancient power plant in our engine room.

All through the short night we proceeded towards Iceland at full speed and at some point lost sight of HEGIRA, who reached Akureryi ahead of us. At 0300 hours we sighted land and around 0400 we were met by HMS DOROTHY GRAY, an armed trawler. She was particularly warmly welcome as we had no charts for that part

of the Icelandic coast, and as she arrived the radio operator was picking up loud nearby U-boat signals.

On 8 July, the two "refugees" from QP13 were escorted around the island to Reykjavik via Denmark Straits, where we arrived at 1845 on 10 July 1942.

The convoy's losses had been particularly heavy due to the dreadful weather conditions that made rescue extremely difficult and the extra personnel on every ship. Among the damaged ships, Liberty JOHN RANDOLPH broke in two and became a total constructive loss, the forward section saved and beached at Onundajordur, Iceland, and later towed to Hvalfjordur where it was utilised as a boat landing and storage at Falcon Point. Other ships lost that night were the American HYBERT, MASSMAR and HEFFRON, as well as the Soviet RODINA. Those reported damaged were the MICHIGAN, MONA KEA and Liberty RICHARD HENRY LEE as well as the Panamanian CAPIRA, EXTERMINATOR and HYBRID.

On 14 July we departed Reykjavik in convoy for United States, and on 23rd I had my birthday at sea!! I was 19 years old!!

We arrived at Boston Mass., at 1245 on 30 July. There was no shore leave but there was fresh food!! The following day we were underweigh for New York, eventually arriving at Pier 3, Hoboken on 2 August and paying off the following day.

Win. A. Haskell,
Mem. N°. 1200.

.....
THE FLOATING TANK BATTALION TO MURMANSK

Some ingenious person unknown to history made a decision to further arm merchant ships sailing into harms way by using the deck cargo of 30ton General Grant tanks, and broaching the cargo for ammunition to fit the 30 mm. cannon in the top turret. I do not know how many ships were armed in this manner, nor do I know if the Russians appreciated us borrowing their Lend Lease stuff or shooting off their ammunition.

Aboard J.L.M.CURRY, which was already heavily armed for a merchant ship, six of the sixteen tanks were opened, and 25 rounds of armour piercing shells placed in the ready-use racks. Off watch merchant crews were volunteered into service, each department picking its own tank. The Naval Armed Guard kept two for themselves. Training took about five minutes. "You put the shell in here, close the breech, then pull this little thing".

Unfortunately, sighting the gun was difficult, the one by six glass prism periscope, designed to see other tanks or large objects made it impossible to view a plane going at 200 knots.

There were no attacks on JW51A at sea, but the German bombers spoiled our Christmas meal, while J.L.M.CURRY was anchored a few miles from the Port of Murmansk. Only to those who know what alarm bells ringing, guns firing, men running and yelling, bombs falling and exploding, does to rational thinking, can appreciate the term "Baptism under Fire". By the time we reached our tank, port side forward, climbed in, loaded the gun, pointed it towards the blue sky and fired, the attack was over. Frantic signals from the shore were directing us not to use guns unless directly attacked. A Russian plane had been shot down.

The following day the tank guns were cleaned, ammo removed and replaced in N°.2 cargo hold. Several weeks later the tanks were unloaded by a British crane ship, and towed, slipping and sliding, along the frozen pier by an old battle worn T24.

Hopefully, the General Grants covered themselves with glory somewhere along the Russian Front.

BOB GOTTSALL,
Mem. N°. 1277.



ARCTIC CAMPAIGN MEMORIAL TRUST



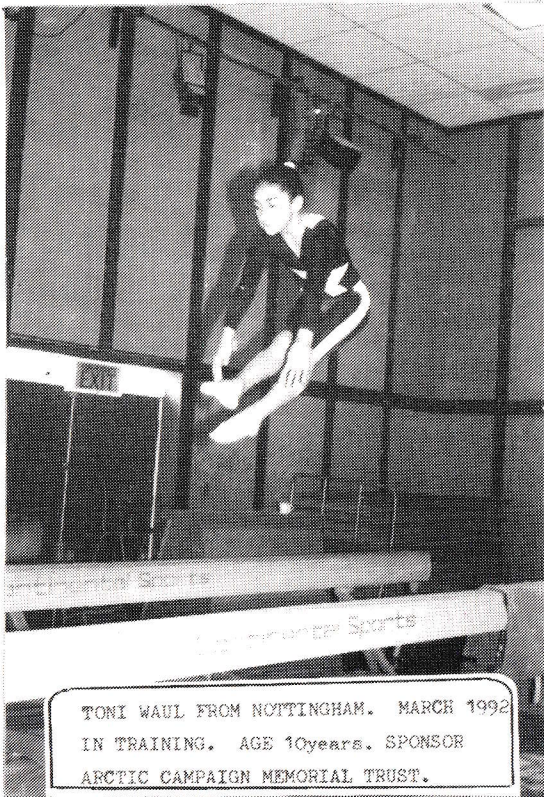
PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL WINDOW DEDICATION at 1100 hrs Saturday 11th July. Invitations with printed Order of Service are available from R.J.Wren, 13 Sherwood Avenue, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 2LD. Tel:0707-55846. Participants of International Reunion are automatically invited

Up Date

EXCHANGE VISITS CONTINUE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE GOING TO MURMANSK FROM DUKERIES COLLEGE, NOTTINGHAM. The A.C.M.T. is sponsoring some of the youngsters who are finding it difficult to raise all the money that they need. I would like to put these young people into private homes in Murmansk, anyone who knows of suitable homes for them can contact me on the above number. This operation is the return exchange. Dukeries hosted some Murmansk youngsters last spring and were given a great deal of

help, so although it is a very slow process and takes a lot of time and effort, the A.C.M.T. is reaching it's second objective and the young people are finding that their counterparts in each others countries are nice people. This is the only way to peace.

SAGA MAGAZINE. Many people have written to me and telephoned about the feature article on the Russian Convoys. Some just wanted medals, others were interested in joining one of the clubs, a lot of them made donations to A.C.M.T. after they had received the information they wanted. Some have since joined NRC & RCC.



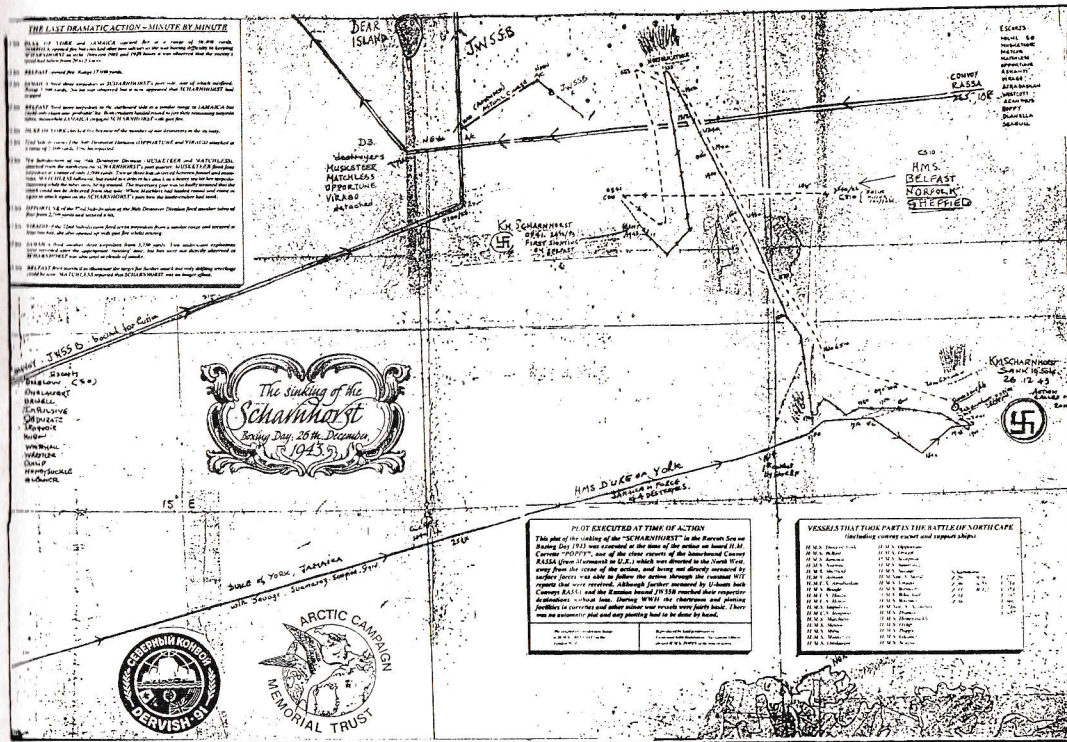
THIS LITTLE GIRL IS FROM A ONE PARENT FAMILY AND REQUIRES CASH SHE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO RUSSIA WITH A GROUP OF YOUNG GYMNASTS FOR VERY SPECIAL TRAINING. ALREADY SHE HAS ACHIEVED HIGH STANDARDS IN REGIONAL COMPETITION AND ONE DAY WILL COMPETE FOR INTERNATIONAL HONOURS IF SHE CAN GET A LITTLE HELP NOW. A.C.M.T. ARE SPONSORING YOUNG TONI WAUL WITH A MODEST GRANT AND IS APPEALING TO THE GENEROSITY OF THOSE OF YOU WHO CAN HELP. SHE WILL WEAR THE A.C.M.T. LOGO ON HER TRAINING STRIP, SO LOOK OUT FOR HER ON T.V.

£900.00 IS NEEDED

WE HAVE £300.00 TO DATE.

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A.C.M.T. TIE. The tie is very simple Navy Blue with a fine stripe diagonally woven with our logo centred as usual. Ties may be obtained for a donation of £8.50. This tie is rather tasteful and looks nice worn with other club badges and emblems, making a welcome change.



THE "SCHARNHORST" ACTION PLOT (Limited Edition)

It has been agreed with the North Russia Club that this unique Chart, presented by John Beardmore, should be reproduced in a very limited edition and sold to help A.C.M.T. funds. As only 250 will be printed with consecutive numbers, this will become a valuable collector's item, and a unique opportunity to obtain a copy of a wartime plot, produced by a veteran whilst the action was taking place. The plot, printed on parchment type paper, measures 25" x 17 1/2" and will be sent to those donating £16.50 including postage. Orders please to A.C.M.T. not N.R.C.

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"JUST NUISANCE"

Copies of the "Just Nuisance" book are still available for a donation of £2.50.

FIXED MEMORIALS

It is planned that we erect further fixed Memorials and we expect to launch projects at:

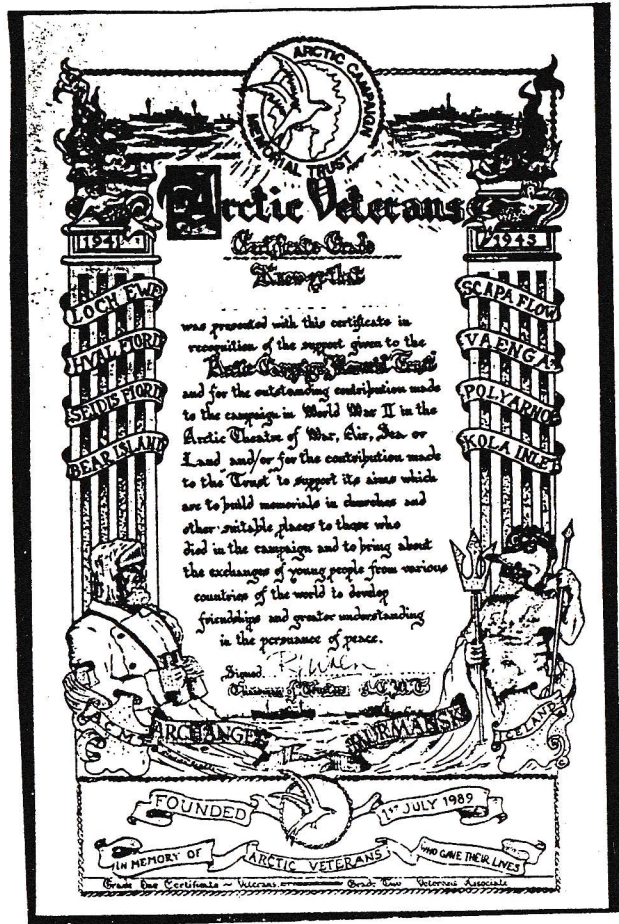
LIVERPOOL PARISH CHURCH (The Sailor's Church, at Liverpool Pier Head) We require a local Veteran to represent us on this project.

GLASGOW CATHEDRAL We require a Veteran living in, or near the city to represent us on this venture.

EDINBURGH CATHEDRAL This one requires a project leader to investigate the possibility of installing a window or plaque.

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THE ARCTIC VETERANS CERTIFICATE (GRADE I & II)



This Arctic Veterans Certificate has been produced to offer a very visible document as a response to persons making a donation of £7.50 or more. Because of costs, donations for less will receive a 'Thank You' letter. Produced on parchment type paper in full colour, size 15" x 9", it makes a very nice item for wall hanging in the Home, Pub or Club. As A.C.M.T. is dedicated to remembering our lost Arctic Veterans, this Certificate makes a very fitting Memorial to them and will be displayed in many places. Your name will be inscribed in script as required. Just complete the form (below) and send it with your donation to:- R.J.WREN, 13 SHERWOOD AVENUE, POTTERS BAR, HERTS, ENGLAND EN6 2LD. (N.L.) Veterans are Grade I. Please tick box, under.

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Many of our donators who are shown as 'Friend' have, since contacting me, become members of one or other of the clubs and will in future be shown as N.R.C. or R.C.C. in future.

THE COMMITTEE AND TRUSTEES OF THE ARCTIC CAMPAIGN MEMORIAL TRUST WISH TO THANK ALL THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED THE TRUST TO CARRY OUT IT'S OBLIGATIONS. OUR OBJECTIVES ARE BEING MET IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER AND WE HOPE THAT THE NEW VETERAN'S CERTIFICATE WILL BE DISPLAYED IN MANY PLACES, ACTING AS A MEMORIAL TO OUR LOST SHIPMATES. THERE IS A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU DUE TO OUR EDITOR DICK SQUIRES, MBE., FOR ALWAYS HELPING US TO GET OUR MATERIAL INTO THE NORTHERN LIGHT IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE.

Ron Wren
Secretary.

From E. Wares: We formed 883 Hurricane Fighter Squadron on May 12, 1942 and after intense training were drafted to AVENGER, and found ourselves north-bound for Seydisfiord. All was well at first, our aircraft were in the hangar bound down with wire ropes and I was on watch, in charge of a small party of mechanics, then the fun started. As we poked our nose above Scotland, a hurricane struck and in very short order the ship was rolling so badly that one by one, the aircraft broke their moorings and were smashing themselves to pieces. I called for the entire squadron to come to the hangar and with the aid of some very stout ropes succeeded in anchoring each aircraft. Whilst this was going on we could hear the sound of some very heavy objects crashing to and fro in the aircraft lift well.

I went below as I was relieved for a cocoa break. The armourer was a R.A.F. corporal and enquired what the noise above our P.O.'s mess was. When I told him that it was coming from the lift well he got a bit upset, and replied that the 250lb bombs had broken loose and that they were all fused. We spent the next few hours chasing these damned bombs and trapping them with duffle coats that had lengths of rope attached at the corners.

Arrival at Seydisfiord found the squadron working feverishly to repair the damaged aircraft, we achieved this in time for sailing with PQ18. North by Bear Island soon after which the attacks started. They came in JU88s and HELLs with torpedoes and bombs. Our flight deck commander counted 70 in one attack, he also informed us that the German commander was instructing his squadrons to "get the carrier". All this went on for six days and sometimes nights as well, although the darkness only lasted for 2 - 3 hours. Our losses were heavy and at one point it looked as if seven merchantmen were sinking or burning.

We made it to Murmansk and the entire ships company were told "go to bed - we'll let you know when you are wanted". The return journey was uneventful. On arrival in U.K., 883 Squadron was sent to Gourock and we had the usual 'Buzz' that leave was coming. Some leave!! We found ourselves unloading lighter loads of stores etc. and on the last lighter was an old 'oppo' of mine A/PO Jock Muir, he waved and called out "You lucky bastard, I'm your relief". The Master at Arms gave me twenty minutes to get packed and if I missed the lighter I would be going with them. I made it, even though I left half my kit behind.

You all know what happened to AVENGER - six survivors, seven if you count me. But that's another story.

From W.F.Nolde: We in HAZARD were part of the PQ16 escort, so the list of ships published in the last edition were of special interest to me. I was on watch on the bridge when just astern of the American merchantman SYROS I spotted two 'homing' torpedoes surface riding and on a parallel course to SYROS. I now learn from the article that they were fired by U703. She was astern hiding in a thick following mist. One each side of SYROS the torpedoes turned inwards and she was hit both sides at about the same time - roughly amidships. She went down very quickly, I think we picked up about nine of her crew. Wonderful quick thinking co-operation from one of our fellow escorts, I can't remember who, who circled us while we were stationary with boats down. One of the crew unfortunately died later from exposure and we buried him at sea.

Even in the midst of all that tragedy life had its lighter moments. One of Syros crew, we found standing up, quite dry, on a carley float - but only in his underwear and frozen stiff. He raised his thumb and shouted "Going my way?" Happily he survived with the help of more than a few illegal tots. We had a 'Thank You' card from him later after he got back to U.S.A., signed "Boston Burglar"! It seems he had a 'record' back home. I should add that while we had him aboard, and as his sole possessions were a vest and pants, we managed to find him a complete grey pin stripe suit from our emergency clothing bale. With a white shirt and a pair of black shoes he walked around the ship looking like a stockbroker.

Perhaps our greatest sadness was when, later while we were at anchor, and feeling a little safer, our sister ship GOSSAMER was bombed and quickly sank. We were anchored very close by and again, as Yeoman of Signals, I was on the bridge and saw it all - a very painful experience for us all and I can never forget it.

From Alexander Armstrong: Do you know if there has been any endeavour to record the more risqué sailor's ballads?

For our trip to Murmansk and Molotovsk a sprightly ancient Royal Marine Sergeant was in charge of our D.E.M.S. ratings. He had a wonderful repertoire of such ballads as - "This Old Hat of Mine", "The Old Monk", and many others which I forget. I seem to remember part of one went thus - "Over the hill from Teararse Creek, came a bloody great halfbreed One Ball Pete". Are these handed down to present day Navy men, or are they being slowly forgotten? To me they were part and parcel of that period, and indeed some, if they had been not quite so blunt would be regarded as masterpieces of literature.

From the editor: We will probably find many of them but, NO, they are not for publication in Northern Light - dont forget that "She who must be obeyed" is the proof reader.

From W.Lee N°.1160: Does any OFFA crew member remember the young seaman who tied a rope around his waist and dived into the icy waters in an attempt to save the merchant seaman, all to no avail, as he just disappeared before he could reach him. We only just managed to get the seaman back aboard as he nearly froze. We had some rough times up there but for sheer courage that took some beating - he could have been left at any time and he knew that.

Also, the little, oriental American merchant cook that we picked up. He seemed to be the only survivor. He had a money belt round him crammed with dollar notes. He said he had been lucky at cards. He didn't want to leave us and we didn't want him to go - he was brilliant, he could have made a flock bed taste good.

From Bob Collins N°.1058: In the last edition there is reference to HMS LADY MADELEINE being with PQ16 from 21 May to 25 May. She was certainly still with the convoy two days later when CAM ship EMPIRE LAWRENCE was sunk on 27th. We survivors were picked up from the sea by a boat from LADY MADELEINE, but because she was too small and eventually overloaded we were transferred to HMS HYDERABAD and were issued with the so called 'Survivors Kit', including carpet slippers (very useful)!

When we reached Murmansk on 30 May, we were literally dumped ashore to fend for ourselves! Naughty!! Our thanks must go to an American sailor (I think he was a Chief) who found us accomodation and food, and generally organised things. We eventually found ourselves on the opposite bank to Murmansk? Where we could watch the air raids in comparative safety, although I believe this was where the ammo dump that blew up later was situated

It was purely a chance meeting on the foreshore that eventually put us D.E.M.S. ratings in the Red Army camp with the crew of EDINBURGH, but that's another story.

From L. Eveleigh N°467: I was a radar rating on LONDON for two years between July '41 and a refit sometime in '43. It has been great to see ex-LONDON crew amongst published members of N.R.C., and I have exchanged letters with some. But it is a reminder of how large a crew a cruiser of LONDON's size carried, that I cannot remember meeting any of them. There are friends and messmates I would dearly like to communicate with, especially any of the following. Can you help please? Fred Rose, Terence 'Nobby' Orton, Enoch Eunsen, Ron Widger, 'Clara', Duggie Beard, 'Taffy' Lewis, Peter McIver, 'Geordie' Fraser, Len Hutchinson and 'Jonesy' from Ashby de la Zouche.

An incident which I believe has only had scant mention anywhere happened when LONDON took Lord Beaverbrook and Avril Harriman a fair bit of the way to a meeting in Moscow with Stalin in 1941. Beaverbrook was able to secure the release of a British Army, Dunkirk veteran, a humble private I believe, who, having escaped from a German P.O.W. camp in Poland to the Soviet Union, had been imprisoned as a 'spy' ever since. On the way home he was billeted in our mess. The poor chap had been horribly mistreated, he was gaunt and white, his mind and memory almost gone. We did our best for him, but with little visible effect. I have many times wondered what became of him.

MORE LETTERS

From Jack Love, Yeo. of Sigs: The Devonport based destroyer INGLEFIELD did several convoys, the winter proved very deadly for these convoys. The days were dark, the snow, and ice from the spray making the use of guns, torpedoes and depth charges impossible, completely frozen, the danger of ships being top heavy, with the obvious problem of capsizing.

One destroyer commander requested to ram enemy ships, our Captain D refused permission. One bright signalman suggested a snowball fight with the German destroyers, to receive an icy look from Captain D.

During Christmas Day 1942, we arrived in Polyarnoe at noon with Convoy JW51A, it was of course dark all day with the noise and flashes of the Russian-German front plainly seen and heard.

As we tied up alongside an oiler to refuel, the Luftwaffe arrived in force, first the JU87s and 88s dive bombers, followed by the high level bombers. However, by some miracle, INGLEFIELD survived, but on return to the mess deck for our Christmas Day dinner, complete chaos met our view. As caterer of the mess, (we were canteen messing), I had obtained rum from the tot drawers of the mess and had made a special mince pie with rum, to follow the 'straight-rush'. The sudden onslaught from the Luftwaffe had consequently left a complete shambles, with the telegraphist and signalmen's Christmas dinners all mixed up together, with articles of kit, gash buckets, crockery, etc., and ice from the bulkhead forming a gigantic egg-whip together with tears from the totless signalmen!!! It took the off duty men some cleaning up, after eating a special issue of corned beef and ships biscuits, a usual meal in rough weather at sea!

However, as peace settled over Convoy JW51A that Christmas Day, during the dog watches, the duty telegraphist played over the S.R.E. the usual records of Vera Lynn, including "Yours", followed by a special request for Bing Crosby's new record "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas".

We were completely out of provisions, especially potatoes and bread, so the Russians gave us black bread, it looked and tasted like sawdust to us capitalists. We thought our life was hardship, but the Russian people certainly had it multiplied.

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From Reg Cannan, N°.243: With reference to the sinking of the Polish submarine JASTRZAM (ex-P551) as mentioned on page 9 of the last Northern Light, I was aboard the old four-stacker ST ALBANS, (ex-USS THOMAS), we were escorting PQ15. I was on watch on the open topped bridge with signal pad and pencil at the ready. We obtained an asdic contact and dropped a pattern of depth charges. Smoke candles floated to the surface but they were not the correct ones for recognition. Then a fleet sweeper drops a pattern and blows a submarine to the surface. As is normal, machine gun fire was directed over the conning tower to isolate the deck gun. I informed our 'Bunts', Jack 'Drip' Draper, that there was a situation report of a Polish manned submarine in the area. He dashed away and got the black flag lowered. Unfortunately there were 4 or 5 Polish ratings killed in the incident.

ST ALBANS was transferred from the US Navy to RN on 23/9/40 and subsequently to the Soviet Navy and renamed DOISTOINEY (Worthy), on 16/7/44, then returned for scrapping on 4/3/49. Amongst the few privileges we got on ST ALBANS was 6d per day Hard Lying Money, 6d per day Foreign Messing, and NO TOT.

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Several other letters, including the promised 'Dervish' follow up stories have been unavoidably held over until the next edition.

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INTERNATIONAL REUNION - UPDATE

31st March - the deadline for booking forms and deposits has come and gone, and still I am getting requests for brochures. Not to worry, there is still room for more, in particular where the bookings have not lived up to expectations of numbers indicated by the questionnaires that you returned to me.

We have had a big disappointment as far as Liverpool is concerned - H.M.S. BRAZEN cannot now be with us. A tight schedule and adverse tides means that there will not be time for her to be there, and it has not been possible to find a replacement. The Flag Officer Plymouth, Admiral Sir Alan Grosse, KBE, however, will still be coming.

Almost as if to compensate for the disappointment, but quite coincidentally, the Type 42 Destroyer H.M.S. BIRMINGHAM will be coming to Glasgow. She will arrive off Kempock Point at 1200 /1215 on Saturday 4th July. We have been invited to send a party of 50 to join BIRMINGHAM at Greenock for passage to Glasgow. (These will be the 50 who booked first - in strict rotation).

This has meant a change of plans as far as the coach trips are concerned. Friday's tour along the South Bank of the Clyde has been cancelled. Instead, we go to Faslane and Glencoyne Whisky Distillery, - the trip originally planned for the next day - Saturday. If any of you who have booked for the original Friday Couch Tour, cannot, for any reason, take advantage of the trip on BIRMINGHAM, please let me know. Please bear in mind that the party will be embarking from Greenock to BIRMINGHAM by Fleet Tender.

The daytime events in Glasgow, i.e. the BIRMINGHAM trip and the Faslane tour are now fully booked. But there is still room at the three evening functions.

I can still accept bookings for Liverpool and Portsmouth, although Portsmouth is nearing saturation point. For those requiring accomodation, please check with me first, as I have had to release some of the rooms reserved for us - the reason for the original 31st March deadline.

Finally, I look forward to meeting you all at some stage during the ten-day reunion. The committee hope that you will enjoy the programme that has been put together for you and that it will be an occasion to remember.

DONT BE TOO LATE -
BOOK NOW -
IT'S A REUNION OF A LIFETIME.

PETER A. SKINNER,
REUNION SECRETARY,
THE ANCHORAGE,
BURSCOTT,
HIGHER CLOVELLEY,
BIDEFORD, DEVON,
EX39 5RR.
(Tel: 0237 431481)

WELCOME ABOARD SHIPMATES.

New members enrolled since 1st February 1992

- 1436. WHETTON Frank L. SHEFFIELD
5 Pattens Lane, Rochester, Kent ME1 2QT.
- 1437. BONNER Thomas F. DOMEIT
17 Bittacy Court, Mill Hill East, London NW7 1HY.
- 1438. DENISEWICZ Joseph. U.S. MERCHANT SHIPS
25 Canada Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02908, USA.
- 1439. DRISCOLL S.G. ASHANTI
63 Culvers Way, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 2LL.
- 1440. CAPLAN Ken. SS ALGIC/CITY OF OMAHA/ESSO PHILADELPHIA
1900 Chestnut Avenue, Glenview, Illinois 60025, USA.
- 1441. CLARK Leonard S. SCYLLA
Flat 9, Greenwich Court, 25 King Street, Southsea,
Portsmouth PO5 4EU.
- 1442. FARMER Harry G. KING GEORGE V / DUKE OF YORK
6 Egerton Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4AP
- 1443. WHITTLE John W. IMPULSIVE
17 Essex Way, Sonning Common, Reading RG4 9RG
- 1444. HOPE Alan P. BYRON
8 Julland Rise, Eaton Road, St.Neots, Cambs PE19 3NF
- 1445. WILLIAMS Cyril A. HOUND
24 Barryfields, Shalford, Braintree, Essex CM7 5HQ
- 1446. BRUCE Donald, LARK
5 Mannion Close, Lydiate, Merseyside L31 4AD.
- 1447. TAYLOR William H. VOLAGE
28 Meadow Way, Westergate, Chichester Sussex PO20 6QT
- 1448. NOONAN Sidney CHASER
28 Eton Drive, Aintree, Liverpool L10 2JZ.
- 1449. WILLIAMS William HAYDON
20 Richardson Road, Eccles, Manchester M30 0WS.
- 1450. NELSON Peter C. ROYAL SIGNALS 126 PASE UNIT, SBNO ARCHANGEL.
Tans End, Church Street, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk,
NR23 1HZ.
- 1451. CASE David J. VOLUNTEER
Saxons, Northfield, Wells-next-the Sea, Norfolk
NR23 1JZ.
- 1452. GRAY Vivian J. SOMALI
7 Heathcote Gardens, Bebington, Wirral L63 2QX.
- 1453. WINTER Kenneth PALOMARES
46 Parlock Ave., Sutton Leach, St Helens, Merseyside
WA9 4PE.
- 1454. ROBERTS Jeffrey E. CASSANDRA
18 Phillips Lane, Formby, Merseyside L37 4AZ.
- 1455. KING Arthur R. SERAPIS
34 Snowdon Ave., Bryn-Y-Baal, Clwyd CH7 6SZ.
- 1456. SILLIS Eric R. MAZURKA
21 Wembley Ave., Poulton-Le-Fylde, Lancs FY6 7JJ.
- 1457. WARD-M^CNALLY James FAME/RODNEY/BEAGLE
33 Wigmore Rd., Wigmore, Gillingham, Kent ME8 OSR.
- 1458. WATKINS Kenneth N. SEARCHER
Bow House, Hurst, Martock, Somerset TA12 6JU.
- 1459. FOWKES Raymond SALAMANDER
18 Grange Road, Hugglecote, Leicester LE6 2SQ.

WELCOME ABOARD SHIPMATES.

(Continued)

- 1460. WARREN Fred^k S. SCYLLA
49 Taverner Road, Boston, Lincs. PE21 8NL.
- 1461. BRITTON Gus.E.C. TRIBUNE
Submarine Museum, HMS Dolphin, Gosport, Hants PO12
2AS.
- 1462. CARTER Stanley LARK
60 Bincote Road, Enfield, Middx EN2 7RB.
- 1463. MARSTON John E. LOUIS
28 Mantilla Drive, Styvechale Drive, Coventry
CV3 6NW.
- 1464. BROWN Charles W.J. MUSKETEER
58 London Road, Pakefield, Lowestoft, Suffolk
NR33 7AQ.
- 1465. SMITH Adam A. MAGPIE
3 Rannoch Road, Letham, Perth, Scotland PH1 2BY.
- 1466. JESSOP George W. BELLONA
78 Musters Road, Ruddington, Notts NG11 6HZ.
- 1467. GASKELL Samuel SAVAGE
Rozena, Ladds Corner, East Court Lane, Gillingham,
Kent ME7 2UW.
- 1468. LAWS Robert A. TRINIDAD/BERMUDA
39 Park Road, Watford, Herts WD1 3QW.
- 1469. KILLEN Alfred J. BELLONA
7 Florida Square, Glasgow G42 8XB.
- 1470. BROOK Francis E. SALAMANDER
19 Queens Crescent, Falkirk, Stirlingshire FK1 5JL.
- 1471. ANDERSON David BELLONA
49 Cawdor Crescent, Kirkcaldy, Fife KY2 6LH.
- 1472. HELLIWELL Morris GLASGOW
36 Coniston Ave., Bradford, Yorkshire BD13 2JD.
- 1473. ASTLES Fredk. G. OPPORTUNE
27 Melchett Cres., Rudheath, Northwich, Cheshire
CW9 7EW
- 1474. WOOLLEY Robert BELLONA
100 Borstal Street, Borstal, Rochester, Kent ME1 3JS
- 1475. LAMB Thomas A. CAMPANIA
29 Cobfield, Chart Sutton, Maidstone, Kent ME17 3SH
- 1476. POINTER Arthur R. NAIRANA
8 Eastmead, South Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 9HH.
- 1477. COLE Harry MATCHLESS
104 Bosmere Gdns., Emsworth, Hants PO10 7NR.
- 1478. SMITH Henry P. SCYTHIA
74 William Street, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME88HW
- 1479. LAWRENCE John W. MILNE
32 Lincoln Rd., Maidstone, Kent ME15 7JH.
- 1480. KENNY George E.J. LONDON
76 Gordon Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 5LU.
- 1481. LLOYD John H. DUKE OF YORK
23 Moss Delph Lane, Aughton, Ormskirk, Lancs.
L39 5DY.
- 1482. WHIBLEY Charles PELICAN/MILNE
2 Farmlands Way, Polegate, Sussex BN26 5LT.

WELCOME ABOARD SHIPMATES.

(Continued)

- 1483. MINTER Ernest E. SCOTT/ORWELL
1 Ladycroft Way, Farnborough, Kent BR6 7BY.
- 1484. WHITELEY Victor A. BERGAMOT
1 Fir Tree Grove, Butts Ash Lane, Hythe, Southampton
SO4 6RA.
- 1485. MILLEN Sydney W. FENCER/TRUMPETER/CAMPANIA
18 River Court, Lewisham Road, Dover, Kent CT17 0OJ.
- 1486. FIELD Frank T.S. ALYNBANK/MERMAID
5 Elm Avenue, Deanland Wood Park, Golden Cross,
Hailsham, Sussex BN27 3SN.
- 1487. McPHERSON Walter B. BERWICK
8 Formby Terrace, North Halling, Rochester, Kent ME2 1AP
- 1488. WHITESIDE Richard J. STARWORT
37 Ethelbert Road, Deal, Kent CT14 6QZ.
- 1489. BATES Dennis F. ARETHUSA/FARNDALÉ/ZEPHYR
16 Cherry Grove, Orchard Drive, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 4NA
- 1490. McNAB John W. SUFFOLK
28 Waterside Road, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 3HA.
- 1491. UTTLEY Cyril HONEYSUCKLE
54 Greenway, Chesham, Bucks HP5 2BX.
- 1492. PILLAR Frederick FENCER
10 Hazel Avenue, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1NR.
- 1493. FOULSER John OPPORTUNE
14 Sycamore Close, Margate, Kent CT9 4NL.
- 1494. CHRISTOFFERSEN J.A. METEOR
13 Hurst Close, Chingford, London E4 8DN.
- 1495. EDWARDS Albert T. POPPY
102 Grange Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2QS
- 1496. LOWE John SHEFFIELD
30 Great South Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME4 5TS.
- 1497. BICKNELL Fredk. A. BERRY
22 Bankside, Chatham, Kent ME5 0BY.
- 1498. HOLLANDS Kenneth W.J. GLASGOW
1Felderwood Road, Parkwood, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9YA.
- 1499. TURNER Albert TRACKER
8 The Lynchets, Lewes, Sussex BN7 2BL.
- 1500. FLETCHER Stanley LIVERPOOL-
40 Sea Road, Abergele, Clwyd LL22 7LU.
- 1501. FRANCE Eric TRIDENT
1 Burlington Ave., Thornbury, Bradford, W.Yorks BD3 7DY

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- Nº. 303. PEARCE S. to 40 Warneford Rd., Harrow, Middx. HA3 9HY.
- Nº. 553. LARGE L.F. to 7 Portreath Place, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4DL.
- Nº. 810. FLOWERS G. to 3 Tower Hill, Much Hadham, Herts SG10 6DL.
- Nº. 979. ROPER.W.J. to 4 Bath Street, Weymouth, Dorset.
- Nº. 558. MARSDEN G. to Flat 1, Orchard Close, Cossington, Somerset TA7 8LL
- Nº. 771. HANLEY J. to 82 Saxilby Place, Prospect Rd, Stourport on Severn, Worcs.
DY13 9DF.

AND MORE NEW MEMBERS - WELCOME ABOARD.

- 1502. PINE William H. SPEEDY
41 Castleview Gdns, West Ham, Pevensey, E.Sussex BN24
- 1503. BELLWOOD Richard RODNEY
Trees, Kirkby Lane, Woodhall Spa, Lincs LN10 6RZ.
- 1504. GOODING Gerald V. MERMAID
62 Essetford Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 3BP.
- 1505. COLLINS Ernest SHARPSHOOTER
42 Ashley Close, Halfway, Sheppey, Kent ME12 3ED.
- 1506. RAWLINGS HARRY K. BRYONY
64 Filey Road, Reading, Berks RG1 3QQ.
- 1507. RUCK Herbert C. SHEFFIELD
54 Fitzroy Road, Whitstable, Kent CT5 2LE.
- 1508. WHITE Albert E. BERWICK
54 Broadfield, West Hoathly, Sussex RH19 4QB.
- 1509. COCKBURN George H. DIADEM
74 Leechcroft Ave., Swanley, Kent BR8 8AP.
- 1510. RICHARDSON John P. BERWICK
12 Havant Road, Emsworth, Hants PO10 7JE.
- 1511. WELLARD Charles E. OPPORTUNE
192 Maidstone Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0DU.
- 1512. HALLAM Ralph DOMMETT
123 Chatsworth Road, Morecambe, Lancs LA3 1BL.
- 1513. EVANS Denis Richard DOMMETT
Florida, Western Promenade, Llandridod Wells, Powys,
LD1 5HP.
- 1514. CATER George A. VOLUNTEER
3 Millview Meadows, Rochford, Essex SS4 1EF.
- 1515. FOSTER Philip A. H.M.S/M. TACTICIAN.
41 Chesnut Avenue, Peterborough PE1 4SA.
- 1516. LANE Ernest G. VINDEK
40 Nevill Avenue, Hove, E.Sussex BN3 7NA.
- 1517. SIEVEY Victor C. LONDON/CAPE PALLISER
3 Stratton Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH9 3PG.
- 1518. WILLS Eric HM S/M P614
13 Whitston Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton NN2 7RR.
- 1519. WALKER Frank VALIANT
212 Yamba Road, Yamba, N.S.W., Australia 2464
- 1520. STEWART Norman NORTHERN WAVE
46 Kilnford Cres. Dundonald, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire.
- 1521. NIELSEN W.E.K.
11276 Barman Ave, Culver City, California 90230, USA.
- 1522. UNDERWOOD James WESTCOTT
54 Seymour Gdns., Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex IGI 3LP
- 1523. PARRY Howard HMCS PORT COLBOURNE
2109 Portage Ave. T534, Deer Lodge Centre, Winnipeg,
Canada R3J 0L3.
- 1524. HUGHES Patrick EDINBURGH
14 Gofton Ave. East Cosham, Portsmouth PO6 2NG.
- 1525. POW Alan R. SS TEMPLE ARCH
43 Brenchly Ave. Gravesend, Kent DA11 7RG.
- 1526. WARNER Peter C.J. ORIBI/ARIES
Amyris, Marlpit Hill, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6JH.

- 1527. NEWTON Leonard G. WESTCOTT
7 Kingfield Road, Easling, London W5 1LD.
- 1528. TENNANT Reginald E. ZEST
11 Amberley Court, Freshbrook Road, Lancing,
Sussex BN15 8DS.
- 1529. PRICE John A. WAINWRIGHT
57 Hall Close, Queensville, Stafford, ST17 4JJ
- 1530. BINGHAM Leo D. INDEFATIGABLE
76 St Michaels Rd. Warwick, Warks. CV34 5RW.
- 1531. WILLIAMS William MANCHESTER/CAIRO
Royal Alfred House, 5 - 11 Hartington Place,
Eastbourne, Sussex BN21 3BS.
- 1532. SHAW Alferd SEAWOLF
3 Hobbs Way, Bow, Devon EX17 6JZ.
- 1533. HIDER Ernest STRIKER
69 Chester Avenue, Lancing, W.Sussex BN15 8PG.
- 1534. LINDSEY William E. OPPORTUNE
130 Knollmead, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 9QW.
- 1535. DARLING Frank L. BENJAMIN H HILL
247 East Lima Street Rear, Philadelphia,
PA19120-3006, U.S.A.
- 1536. HAYNES Lelie H. MEYNELL/WOODCOCK
16 Wood Street, Horwich, Bolton, Lancs BL6 6BN.

UP TO AND INCLUDING 13 MAY 1992.

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S T O P P R E S S N E W S

1992 TOUR TO ARCHANGEL - SOLOVETSKY ISLANDS - MURMANSK.

By request of some members, and friends in the Russian Republic we are organising a tour which will be limited to 30 (thirty) persons. At the time of going to print (15th May) we do not have the exact details of the timed itinerary or final costs. Certainly, by the time this edition is mailed to you all details will be available and if you have made an earlier enquiry you will receive this information. During the visit we will be the honoured guests at the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Ship's Boys School on Solovetsky and will also participate in Navy Day of the Russian Fleet. We also expect to visit a group of R.A.F. graves recently located in Severomorsk (Vaenga). Bookings will close on 13th June, so be quick if you wish to book: Contact - R.D.Squires, 28 Westbrook Rd, Liverpool L25 2PX. (Tel: 051 487 9567)

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

There are still a number of subscriptions outstanding! Is this going to be your last copy of Northern Light???????

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MEMBERSHIP LIST & BOOKLET

The new computerised Membership List is being produced but will not be available for despatch until late June - should you require your copy before the September Northern Light is mailed, please send a large (9" x 7") stamped addressed envelope to L.A.SULLIVAN, 2 Broadlawn, Woolavington, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 8EP.

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