



## Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand

Newsletter  
December 2021



Dear shipmates, families and friends



The USS Howard (above), a United States Navy Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, arrived in Wellington Harbour on Friday 26 November 2021 to conduct exercises with the New Zealand Defence Force.



HMNZS Wellington (above) deployed to the Solomon Islands on Monday 7 December 2021 on peacekeeping duties.



CTF150 is one of the Combined Maritime Forces' three task forces in the Middle East and has been under the command of the Royal New Zealand Navy since July 2021. Commander of the CTF 150, Captain Brendon Clark, RNZN, said successful interceptions of US\$26m worth of drugs were the culmination of coordinated efforts of personnel, ships, helicopters, fixed wing aircraft, and unmanned aerial vehicles from across the Combined Maritime Forces nations.

### RCCNZ meets for annual Christmas lunch

Our pre-Christmas meeting was a little different this year.

It was decided to repay a little of the wonderful hospitality the club has received over many years by Rear Admiral David Ledson and his wife Barbara at their home in Otaki by hosting them to a luncheon at the Boulcott Farm Golf Club in Lower Hutt.

This was attended by 20 members, shipmates and friends including H.E. Georgii Zuev, Russian Ambassador to New Zealand.

A small presentation to David and Barbara was made as a memento of our long association



The lunch was joined by H. E. Georgii V Zuev, Russian Ambassador to New Zealand (above, third from left).

### Massey University student researching the Arctic Convoys

Grace Penlain of Wellington is a postgraduate student at Massey University and is researching the New Zealanders who took part in the Arctic convoys.

"I can't remember when I first heard about the convoys, but I've always been fascinated by them. As someone with a lifelong interest in maritime and military history, I suppose that's unsurprising, but it's more than that for me. There are some stories that just grab you, and the extraordinary challenge and courage of the convoys is one of those for me.

"It surprised me that they were not well known in New Zealand and have been largely unstudied by my fellow historians when we have written so much about the Second World War. Even fewer people seem to know that there were New Zealanders involved. When I decided to do my master's degree at last, I knew I wanted to do it on the convoys – but not just on the convoys themselves. I wanted it to be about people.

"For my research, I am trying to find as many of the New Zealanders who took part (both those who were Kiwis prior to the war and those that settled here and became Kiwis later) as I can, what part they played in the convoys, and (if possible) how that affected their lives.

"I've started gathering names, records, and stories together already but if anyone would be interested in speaking with me or has information they would like to share, that would be much appreciated. I'm also happy to answer any questions about my research".

You can get in touch with Grace via email at:  
[Grace.Penlain.1@uni.massey.ac.nz](mailto:Grace.Penlain.1@uni.massey.ac.nz)



## Reflections

### Lieutenant Richard Anthony "Tony" Ray

Tony was appointed 1st Lieutenant in the Colony Class Frigate HMS Bahamas built by Walsch-Kaiser Co., Inc., Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A. and based in Londonderry. Being part of the 9th Escort Group the ship was employed on fast convoys to Gibraltar, sweeps in the Western Approaches for U-Boats and a Convoy taking supplies to Murmansk in Russia.



In 1945 Tony was mentioned in a Despatch for distinguished service "For skill, patience & determination whilst serving in HMS Bahamas in towing a damaged ship 160 miles in severe weather". HMS Bahamas K503 is pictured above.

The damaged ship was British destroyer HMS Cassandra which was hit by a Gnat torpedo fired by German U-boat U-365. The entire bow ahead of the forward magazine, including 'A' gun turret were blown off and the structure abaft this to the forward bulkhead of the fuel tanks was wrecked. 62 men lost their lives in this attack. Cassandra was taken in tow for three days (stern first) by the British frigate HMS Bahamas. Later the tow was passed over to a Soviet tug which towed her to Polyarny in Kola Inlet.

The 8 May 1945 was VE Day and Tony had been at sea without a break for nearly 10 years. Bahamas was put into Reserve and on 15 February 1946 Tony was released from Naval Service. He passed away in New Zealand on 22 April 2009.



Photo, taken in Ireland in June 1945, shows from left: Lieutenant F.P.C. Haverfield RNR (Navigating Officer), Lieutenant R.A. Ray RD RNR (1st Lieut), and Lieutenant Commander W.S. Thomson OBE RNR (Commanding Officer).

Contributed by: Cosima Ray, wife of Lt. Tony Ray

## Reflections

### Norwegian soldiers' repatriation

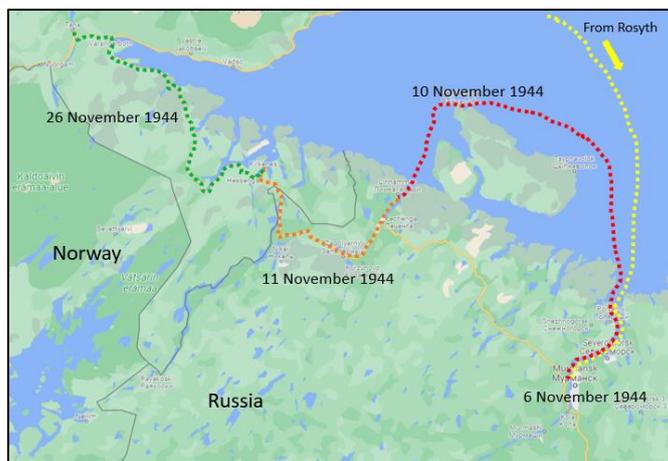
Current RCCNZ president Derek Whitwam was crew on board HMS Berwick when a company of Norwegian soldiers were repatriated from Rosyth, Scotland to Kirkenes, Norway via Murmansk on 31 October 1944.



Norwegian troops on board HMS Berwick

The story of the Norwegian troops of 2.Bergkompani after HMS Berwick shipped them to Murmansk is as follows:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 31 October 1944  | Departed Rosyth   |
| 6 November 1944  | Arrival Murmansk  |
| 10 November 1944 | Transported by ship from Murmansk to Liinahamari  |
| 11 November 1944 | Arrival in Kirkenes by Russian trucks, camped in a small village called Sandnes (abandoned German camp). Stayed and trained in the camp until 26th of November. |
| 26 November 1944 | The Norwegian troops left Kirkenes area for Tana (18km NW)  |



The Russian army was in command in the liberated area and the Norwegians were not involved in any combat together with the Russians.

There was orderly cooperation between the Russian and the Norwegian command, troops and locals in this period.



## Blazing a Wartime Trail Around Loch Ewe

Tuesday 31st August 2021 saw the official launch of *'Blazing a Wartime Trail around Loch Ewe'*, a new outdoor trail commemorating the vital role that Loch Ewe played in World War Two.



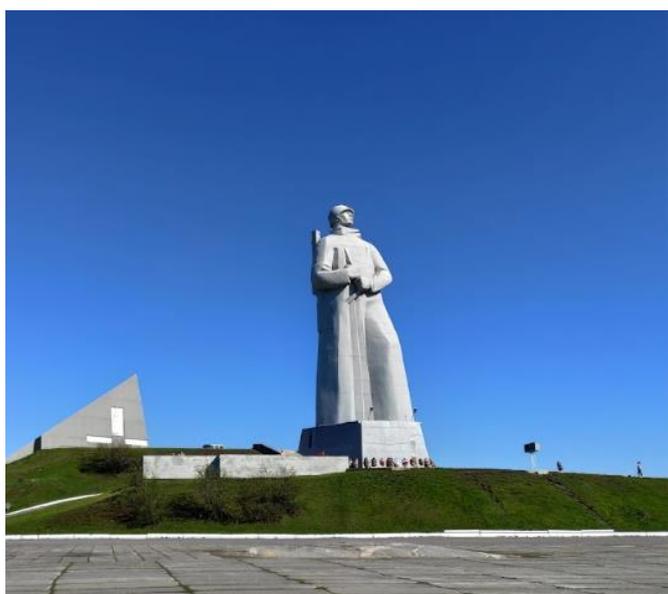
As the strategic gathering place for the Arctic Convoys between 1941 and 1945, remains of the area's wartime activity are still visible around Loch Ewe. The new trail showcases four new bold and atmospheric silhouette public artworks, incorporated with viewpoint benches, new interpretation and mosaic panels created by local schoolchildren.

The trail marks important sites around Loch Ewe and shares the stories of how the local community and landscape was shaped by the war. The launch date of 31st August 2021 was important to mark the 80th anniversary of Operation Dervish, the arrival of the first of the Arctic Convoys of WWII which sailed from Liverpool on 12th August 1941 and arrived at Archangelsk on 31st August 1941.

The trail was opened by Arctic Convoy veteran David Craig and the pupils of Bualnaluib Primary School in Aultbea. Now aged 96, David is among the last surviving Convoy veterans and faced some of the most brutal conditions of the Convoy journeys including enemy attack, horrific weather conditions and freezing sea ice.

Source: Russian Arctic Convoy Museum

## Alyosha : A Memorial



The towering 35m tall concrete statue together with its eternal flame stands tall over the city of Murmansk in northern Russia to commemorate Soviet fighters of World War Two.



Thursday 24 March @ Lower Hutt RSA

Thursday 25 August @ Lower Hutt RSA

Thursday 24 November @ TBA

# 2022

Further details will be advised as they come to hand

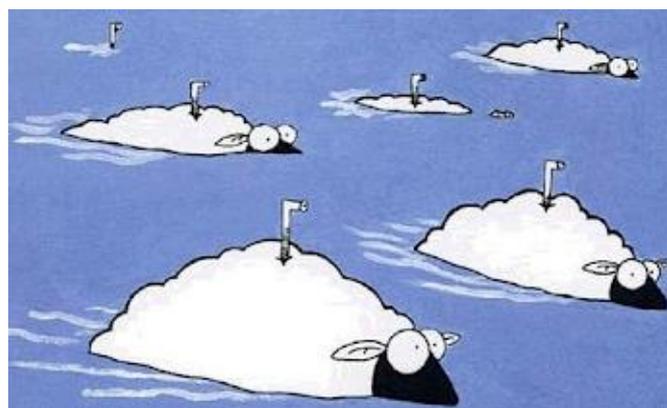
### *The sea captain and the punk rocker*

*An old sea captain was sitting on a bench near the wharf when a young man walked up and sat down. The young man had spiked hair and each spike was a different colour ... green, red, orange, blue, and yellow.*

*After a while the young man noticed that the captain was staring at him.*

*"What's the matter old timer, never done anything wild in your life?"*

*The old captain replied, "Got drunk once and married a parrot. I was just wondering if you were my son!"*



**Ewe Boats!**



### *Up Spirits!*



Derek Whitwam  
President, Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand  
Tel: (04) 971 4636 or Mobile: (027) 971 4636  
Email: [atired.92@gmail.com](mailto:atired.92@gmail.com)  
Web: <http://www.russianconvoyclub.org.nz>