



Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand

Newsletter
February/March 2019

Dear shipmates, families and friends

Vice Chairman of Russian Arctic Convoy Museum visits

Bruce Hudson, Vice Chairman of the Russian Arctic Convoy Museum visited Wellington on Tuesday 5 February 2019. Bruce, who was in New Zealand visiting friends in New Plymouth, took the opportunity to fly down to Wellington to meet with RCCNZ members Derek Whitwam, Chris King and Syd Wells to discuss mutual items of interest to both our organisations.

After visiting our plaque on the waterfront and viewing Wellington from the top of the cable car he very kindly presented our club with a plaque of HMS Helicon.

HMS Helicon was the name given to the shore base at Aultbea, on the shores of Loch Ewe, where the convoys destined for the North Russian ports of Murmansk and Archangelsk gathered prior to setting sail. He also presented the club with a DVD featuring pictures of the Loch Ewe area which we will show at our March meeting.

Royal Navy assists research in Antarctica

Royal Navy survey ship HMS Protector smashed through nearly 500km of Antarctic ice to help scientists begin a five-year mission to understand how Antarctica is contributing to global sea-level rise.

Working with British Antarctic Survey's vessel RRS Ernest Shackleton, the Plymouth-based ice-strengthened vessel crunched its way to a remote Antarctic ice shelf to support a team of 100 scientists who seek to understand a glacier the size of Great Britain.



The gigantic Thwaites Glacier is melting – accounting for four per cent of the annual sea level rise every year. Scientists fear the huge mass of ice could eventually collapse, raising the global sea level 80 centimetres – more than two and a half feet – and so are beginning a five-year programme of field activities on the glacier.

With the nearest British and American scientific research stations more than 1,600 kilometres away from the research site, the two ships were called upon to deliver essential heavy stores to the ice edge in preparation for the arrival of the scientists next year.

HMS Protector operates several small boats, including the survey motor boat James Caird IV, the ramped work boat Terra Nova and two Pacific 22 RIBs Nimrod and Aurora. She also embarks three BV206 all-terrain vehicles and a number of quad-bikes and trailers for activities on Antarctica, such as moving stores and equipment.



Thwaites Glacier

Syd Wells : Life membership awarded

At our pre-Christmas meeting in November it was moved and seconded that our Treasurer, Syd Wells, be offered a Life Membership of the Club for his sterling work as Treasurer. On being advised of this (he was unable to attend the meeting due to a pressing hospital appointment) he was taken by surprise but accepted the honour with thanks.

Ushakov medal

Would all members who received the Ushakov medal kindly let me have the number which is engraved on the back of the medal. You may e-mail details to atired.92@gmail.com. The Russian Arctic Convoy Museum in Aultbea, Loch Ewe wishes to create a permanent record of all personnel who were presented with this award.

Diary Dates

SS Otaki Memorial Wreath Laying, Otaki College
Monday 11 March 2019 at 10:30hrs

Club Meeting, Anzac Lounge, Lower Hutt Memorial RSA
Thursday 28 March 2019 at 1100hrs

RCCNZ Plaque Wreath Laying Wellington Waterfront
Thursday 9 May 2019 at 1100hrs

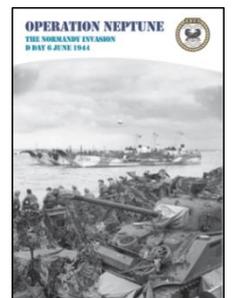
Russia's National Day, Wellington
Wednesday 12 June 2019

Club Meeting, Anzac Lounge, Lower Hutt Memorial RSA
Thursday 29 August 2019 at 1100hrs

D Day in print

The Royal Navy has published an interesting online book detailing the D-Day activities of Operation Neptune.

You can download a copy by clicking [here](#). If you are reading the hardcopy version of this newsletter perhaps someone can help you to Google search for the publication.



Obituary

We regret to advise the passing of our member:

Dugald McKenzie
Arctic Convoy service on HMS Bermuda
Passed away on 6 December 2018

Russian Arctic Convoy Museum impresses visitors

The recent visit to Wellington by Bruce Hudson, Vice Chairman of the Russian Arctic Convoy Museum in Aultbea, Loch Ewe focussed our attention on this magnificent facility and recognise the effort of a small group of volunteers.

Recent visitors to the Museum have shared their impressions via social media online.

Here's a few of those comments:

- Although this museum is small in size, it contains a wealth of information and artefacts about the brave seafarers who manned the Naval and merchant ships on these important and very dangerous convoys. It acts as a fantastic tribute to those brave souls, and rightly so. Congratulations to everyone concerned in opening and maintaining this museum.
- We visited the project having seen the memorials and WWII remains around Loch Ewe whilst here on holiday. Whether someone who, had family involved (from many UK & euro/allied countries) in WWII Russian Arctic Convoys, interested in the role of women, would like to understand what Remembrance Day is about ... this place is a MUST. Displays, models and pictures set out the facts and doesn't pull its punches on the horrors of war! The things we will especially remember are the 'story boards' of military personnel and local people telling their personal story in both words and pictures - very moving! ... The staff are delightful and knowledgeable and take opportunity to give explanation to any age. I came away having photographed a poem by a survivor who lost his 'best mate' having been torpedoed. This will be read out at our Remembrance Service as it tells us why we should all buy at least one poppy and remember with great thanks! I believe this is a private project, so a big well done to the organisers. Call in, learn, enjoy and support.



- My father sailed with Merchant Navy on the Arctic Convoys but would talk about his experience when I was growing up. Not uncommon, I now realise. Having secured the Arctic Star for my father [posthumously regrettably], I wanted to pad out the

bones of what I knew with a visit. Lots to see and read about the sailors' experiences, although, for my taste, there seemed to be a stronger emphasis on the Royal Navy and supporting services. However, taking a broad view, it must have been hell for them all, and that comes over strongly.

- Took a different route home from weekend away to visit this... it's on the main road so if travelling from Gairloch area carry on rather than going into Aultbea. Anyway, lovely wee place with so much information on the area, the people, the Russian Convoys ... wow! ... appreciate it's volunteer run so what they have achieved is excellent. Go visit and learn about how this small remote place was so different in the 1940's.



Thinking outside the box!

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson were camping. They'd gone to sleep beneath the night sky, when Holmes awoke and shook his companion.

"Watson, look at the sky and tell me what you see."

"I see millions of brilliant stars," Watson answered.

"And what does that tell you?"

"Astronomically, it tells me that there are countless galaxies and potentially billions of planets.

"Astrologically speaking, Saturn is in Leo. Theologically, I see that God is all-powerful and that we are small and insignificant. And you, Holmes?"

Holmes paused. "What I see, Watson, is that someone has stolen our tent!"

Doing fine!

A pregnant woman lapses into a coma. She awakens and frantically calls for her doctor.

"You had twins, a boy and a girl. They're fine," he says. "Your brother named them."

Oh, no, the new mother thinks. He's an idiot. Expecting the worst, she asks, "What's the girl's name?"

"Denise," the doctor says.

Not bad, she thinks. I guess I was wrong about him. "And the boy?"

"DeNephew"!

Up Spirits!



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