



## Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand

### Newsletter

November/December 2018

Dear shipmates, families and friends

#### Convoy Club gets together for Christmas



The annual Christmas meeting of the club was held, as usual, at the home of Rear Admiral David Ledson and Barbara on Thursday 22 November 2018.

The weather was rather inclement to start but improved after the wonderful lunch provided by Barbara. The meeting was rather informal and was a good chance to meet the new Russian Ambassador Georgy Zouev and Captain Simon Rooke representing Rear Admiral John Martin Chief of Navy.

Also attending was a good number of our club members. As shown in the accompanying picture the Christmas cake was cut by Barbara and an enjoyable time was had by all.

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#### Convoy art commission to hang in St Petersburg museum

A painting commissioned by a Scottish veteran of the Arctic convoys will be displayed in a prestigious St Petersburg museum.

Murray Haddow, 92 (at right middle), who lives in Monifieth, served on board the destroyer HMS *Caprice* during the perilous journeys which took much needed supplies, including food and weapons to the Russian people.

Mr Haddow was involved in six of the 78 convoys which took place between August 1941 and May 1945, having joined the navy at 18, and still has vivid memories of the treacherous journeys from Loch Ewe and Scapa Flow to Russia, but is modest about his achievements, describing himself simply as 'an accidental hero'.

More than 3,000 British sailors and airmen died between 1941 and 1945 taking part in the convoys, a vital part of Churchill's attempts to keep Stalin in the alliance against Hitler.

The voyage, described by Churchill as 'the worst journey in the world' was particularly dangerous as the almost eternal Arctic daylight meant that the convoys were under constant threat from German air attack, while surface ships of the German navy, and the feared U-boats harried them at every opportunity. In 1999, a monument to those who lost their lives taking part in the convoys was unveiled at Cove in Wester Ross.

Mr Haddow commissioned a painting by artist Fiona Haddow (below right) of the monument which has now been presented to the Consul General of Russia, Mr Andrey Pritsipov (below left), at a ceremony at the Russian Consulate in Edinburgh.

The painting will now be taken to Russia, where it will be exhibited at the new 'Museum of the history of the Arctic Convoys 1941-1945' at St Petersburg's Admiral Makarov State University in Russia.

The Consul General said: "The brotherhood in arms forged between our nations stands as an indispensable chapter of our shared and proud past, providing us with an obligation to unite our efforts – personal, private or public – to build an enduring and lasting legacy of the Arctic Convoys and their heroes," said Mr Pritsipov.

"That is why any support and attention to the matter is much appreciated. And we are most grateful for this work of art from the veteran Murray Haddow and family, which depicts the mood and solemn beauty of the place where the convoys were formed."

He added: "Chronicles of the convoys are an integral part of history of Russian-British relations.



"The fate of thousands of sailors of Great Britain, Russia, the United States and other allied countries was to challenge formidable Northern seas to confront the enemy, ready to attack at any moment.

"Last year I was delighted to take part in the official opening of the Russian Arctic Convoys Project's exhibition centre in Aultbea and I also look forward to opening of the Arctic Convoys Museum in St Petersburg very soon.

"I hope to see all these important historical places of worship, grief and pride working together in a strong global network aimed at remembering and promoting the strength of human spirit of those who sailed in these legendary convoys."

*Source: The Courier*

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#### Welcome

A warm welcome to Cameron Taylor as an Associate Member. Cameron's grandfather, William Taylor C/JX 373083, served on HMS *Vigilant* on Operation *Gearbox* (relief of Spitzbergen in October 1943) and on Convoys JW 54B, RA 56, JW 56A and RA 58.

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## Centenary of WW1 Armistice commemorated



Nearly 300 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel gathered in Wellington to support the centenary of the Armistice, which ended the First World War, on Sunday 11 November 2018.

Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal Kevin Short said the NZDF had led the planning and

delivery of seven overseas First World War military commemorations, following in the footsteps of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

"The Sunset Ceremony brought the elements of all seven of the overseas commemorations home to Pukeahu National War Memorial Park in Wellington, which was focus of our domestic commemorations and the final resting place of our Unknown Warrior," Air Marshal Short said.

"At home, NZDF personnel have supported more than 1,500 community events since 2015. It's been humbling to see the way communities all over New Zealand have come together to reflect and remember the First World War and its terrible impact."

Armistice Day 2018 began at 5.45am with the dressing of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior with his medals and the Remembrance Wreath, which will be the only official wreath laid during the national Armistice commemorations in Wellington.

At 10.50am the 16 Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of the New Zealand Artillery, fired a 100-gun salute supporting the Armistice Centenary National Ceremony in Pukeahu National War Memorial Park from Wellington's waterfront. The guns fell silent at 11am, as they did 100 years ago.

At 7.30pm the NZDF Band and personnel carrying the NZDF's 21 Queen's and Regimental colours, guidon, banners and standards filled Pukeahu for the Sunset Ceremony marking the end of the First World War.

The final daily Last Post ceremony, which has been conducted every night since Anzac Day 2015, was the playing of the Rouse for the only time, symbolising that mourning is over and normal life can continue.

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## Obituary

We regret to advise the passing of our member:

Dennis Whitehead  
Arctic Convoy service on HMS Berwick  
Passed away on 5 November 2018



## That eye patch!

A sailor and a pirate are in a bar recounting their adventures at sea.

Seeing the pirate's peg-leg, hook, and eye patch the sailor asks: "So, how did you end up with the peg-leg?"

The pirate replies: "We were caught in a huge storm and a giant wave swept me overboard.

Just as me crew were pullin' me out a school of sharks appeared and one of 'em bit me leg off."

"Blimey!" said the sailor. "And how'd you get the hook?"

"Arrrr...", mused the old salt, "I got into a fight over a woman in a bar, and me hand got chopped off."

"Blimey!" remarked the sailor.

"And how about the eye patch?"

"Oh that," said the pirate, looking embarrassed. A seagull droppin' fell into me eye."

"You lost your eye to a seagull dropping?" the sailor asked incredulously.

"Well..." said the old sea dog, "it was me first day with the hook!"

## Speed drinking!

*A thirsty sailor runs from his boat to the nearest bar and shouts to the bartender, "Give me twenty shots of your best scotch, quick!"*

*The bartender pours out the shots, and the sailor drinks them as fast as he can.*

*The bartender is very impressed and exclaims, "Wow. I never saw anybody drink that fast."*

*The sailor replies, "Well, you'd drink that fast too, if you had what I have."*

*The bartender says, "Oh my God! What is it? What do you have?"*

*"Fifty cents!" replied the sailor.*



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## Up Spirits!



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