Tapestry by Katie Russell

St Mary's Cathedral
Palmerston Place
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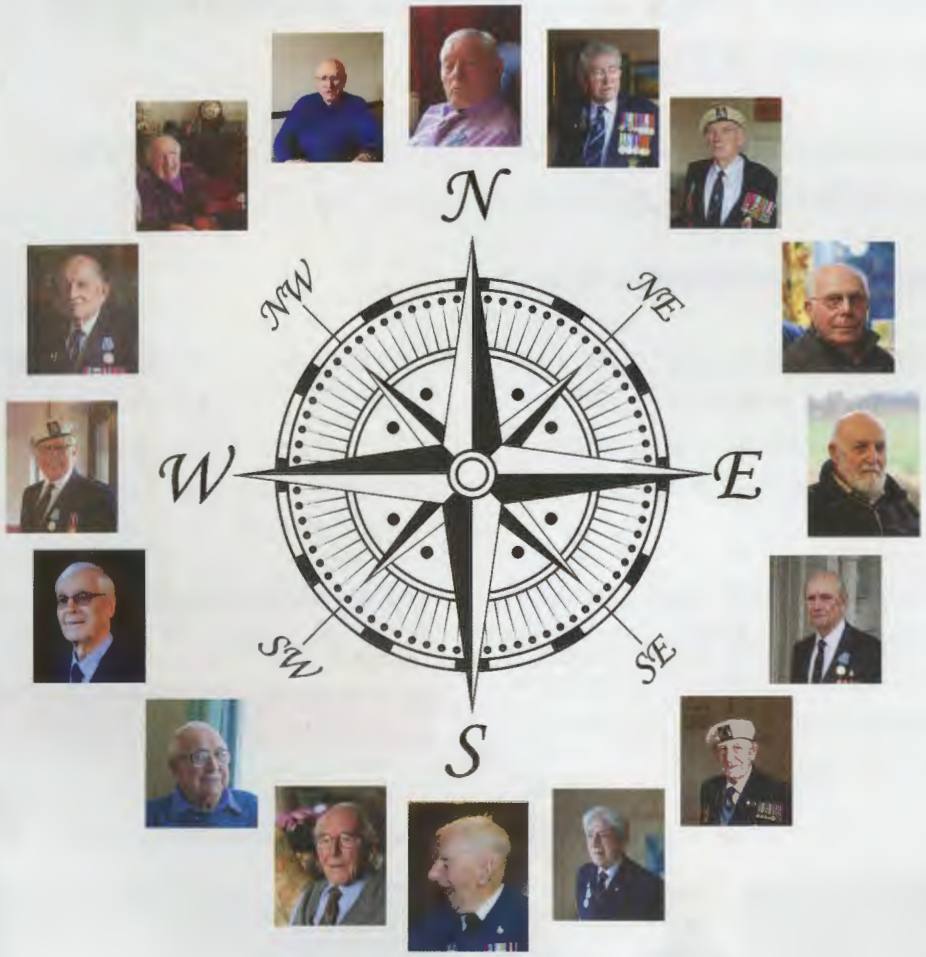
ARCTIC CONVOYS - MEN AND ICE






ARCTIC CONVOYS - MEN AND ICE

Portraits: Colin Dickson

Research & Text: Sandra Marwick

Tapestries: Katie Russell

Edinburgh Trade Banners: The Trades Maiden Hospital

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In association with Legion Scotland
(Legion Scotland is a trading name of the Royal British Legion Scotland)

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

As Visitor of the St. Mary's Cathedral Workshop, I am delighted to introduce this Festival exhibition. Wars have produced remarkable acts of heroism and courage by members of the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and the Merchant Navy. Some of the stories of such selfless acts are well known, others less so and in danger perhaps of being lost in the mists of time. After the German invasion of Russia, the Arctic convoys heading from the relative safety of home waters steamed across the top of the world with vital supplies for the Russian people. These convoys faced mountainous seas and the constant threat of U boats, aircraft or battleships moored in Norwegian fiords. In summer months with the midnight sun there was no darkness to shield them and no place to hide.

Shortly before Remembrance Sunday 2014, survivors of the Arctic convoys living in and near Edinburgh were presented with the Ushakov medal in the Cathedral by the Russian Consul General. This year the Cathedral honours these men once more and this exhibition tells their stories as told to Sandra Marwick earlier this year, whilst Colin Dickson's portraits let us see into their faces. Finally Katie Russell's tapestries reflect the colours and atmosphere of the Arctic.

This Festival exhibition reminds us of acts of courage by those whose tale we are privileged to hear, and of the supreme sacrifice of brave souls whose final resting place was the cold waters of the Arctic.

Anne

The Provost of St Mary's Cathedral

"They that go down to the sea in ships" (Ps 107.23)

Men, as the psalmist states, do "go down to the sea in ships", and Britain as a sea-faring nation is no exception. This exhibition, which the Cathedral is proud to host, tells of exceptional men whose ships sailed across the roof of the world to help an ally in the fight against fascism. This exhibition highlights these perilous journeys and the sacrifices made; it also reminds me of two poignant memories.

The first was when I was an undergraduate studying Russian in 1971. I was staying in Minsk, the capital of Belarus. After the Battle of Britain Hitler ordered his armies to head east. Minsk was on the direct route to Moscow and had suffered appalling casualties, both military and civilian. "One in four" Russians had been killed I was told everywhere I went, and certainly the black and white film footage of the Nazi invasion and its aftermath made harrowing viewing. One day stands out. This group of British students met a Soviet fighter pilot, holder of "Hero of the Soviet Union", the highest accolade for valour that can be awarded in the USSR, the equivalent of our Victoria Cross. This fighter pilot explained how in 1943 the fuel in the plane's tanks came to the Soviet Union by the Arctic convoys. She – yes, it was a woman – expressed her eternal gratitude to those who braved the seas to bring her the fuel needed for her plane to fly to defend the motherland and defeat fascism.

My other memory relates to family holidays in Wester Ross. The south side of Loch Ewe was a great favourite as our three young sons explored the remains of the wartime pillboxes and bunkers, scattered around the sea loch. It could be pretty wild there, even in the summer, and difficult to imagine how this was a safe assembly point for convoys setting sail for far more stormy seas and Murmansk. The memorial at Cove is a hallowed one.

The Cathedral honours those on the arctic convoys who went "down to the sea in ships."

The Very Revd Dr GJT Forbes CBE

Introduction

August 14, 1941 Joint message to Stalin

We are at the moment cooperating to provide you with the very maximum of supplies that you most urgently need.....We realise how vitally important to the defeat of Hitlerism is the brave and steadfast resistance of the Soviet Union and we feel therefore that we must not in any circumstances fail to act quickly and immediately in this matter of planning the program for the future allocation of our joint resources.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Winston S. Churchill [1]

....it is urgently important in the common interest that we should do everything in our power to keep Russia on her feet.[2]

Stalin had produced a shopping list of the supplies deemed essential for the defence of his country after the invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941 by three million of Hitler's troops under 'Operation Barbarossa'. The goods were to be transported in convoys (merchant ships escorted by military vessels) sailing the northern route of 2,500 miles through the cruellest of seas, the Arctic Ocean. The convoys assembled at Iceland (usually at Hvalfjörður) and journeyed around the north of Nazi-occupied Norway to terminate at Murmansk or Arkangel. The first convoy left from Liverpool on 12 August 1941 but after September 1942 the vessels sailed from Loch Ewe and the River Clyde. Outbound and homebound convoys were planned so that a close escort accompanied the merchant ships to port, remaining to make the subsequent return trip, whilst a covering force of heavy surface units was also provided to guard against sorties by German surface ships. Convoy series PQ (outbound) and QP (homebound), operated from September 1941 to September 1942; the second series JW (outbound) and RA (homebound) ran from December 1942 until the end of the war, but ceased during the summer months of 1943 and 1944 as the continual Arctic daylight made them even more vulnerable to enemy attacks especially by aircraft. Hostile submarine action remained a threat at all times.

Britain had overall responsibility for conveying the cargoes to north Russia; the Royal Navy providing cover with ships from the Home Fleet and later aircraft-carriers, minesweepers, armed trawlers, merchant anti-aircraft vessels and merchant vessels equipped with catapult-launched fighter aircraft along with ships of the Ocean Rescue Service. Several Polyanoe-based Russian destroyers helped to run the convoys through the dangerous approaches to the Kola inlet; and after the entry of the USA into the war (8 December 1941) American merchant ships became increasingly part of the composition of the convoys. 'With the dice loaded against us in every direction' the sailors contended with tempestuous seas, fog – 'Arctic sea smoke' – blizzards,

1. *My Dear Mr Stalin,* ed Susan Butler (Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 41-2.
2. *The Scotsman,* 24 September 1941.

temperatures of -40°, perpetual daylight in summer and endless darkness in winter, navigational problems caused by the Arctic environment, atmospheric depressions, re-fuelling difficulties, cargo breaking free in the holds; gun barrels, aerials, wires, guardrails, masts, ladders, winches all covered with black ice which had to be removed by axes – to which was added the constant likelihood of enemy attack from below, on and above the sea.[3] Much of the convoy route came within the range of German airstrikes from Norway and Finland; and when the ships arrived in the regularly bombed Kola Inlet, merchant crews faced the problems of lack of infrastructure for unloading and dispersing cargoes or accommodating personnel along with primitive medical help and minimal social and recreational activity which made their often lengthy sojourn even bleaker. Unlike the ships of the Royal Navy which quickly departed to accompany the homeward bound convoy, the merchant vessels had to remain until their holds were emptied then loaded with ballast or Russian freight such as timber, ores, cotton, tobacco, furs and on one occasion 17 tons of badger hair and 50 tons of caviar.

Merchant Navy 2nd Radio Officer Alexander Inglis, educated at George Heriot's and Edinburgh College of Art, described some of his experiences in an interview in 1943 following his award of an MBE:

> *It is difficult to gain any idea of the terrible conditions under which the Murmansk people are living. The city is only a few miles from the Finnish front and during my ten months' stay we were constantly harassed by bombing raids. One line of incendiaries, planted skilfully by a single Nazi plane, could wipe out whole sections of the town if the wind were strong enough and fires were almost impossible to fight in a city built almost entirely of wood, but nothing can beat these people.... starvation, fires, cold and desolation cannot break the spirit of the Murmansk people. They are invincible.*[4]

In a speech given on 27 March 1945 A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty said:

> *Under British Naval Command and almost entirely British naval escort, 739 loaded cargo ships have sailed for North Russian Ports. In spite of the constant battle against air, submarines and surface attacks and frightful Arctic gales, 677 arrived. We lost two cruisers, five destroyers, eight escort ships and an oiler. Ninety-five officers and 1061 men of the Royal Navy lost their lives on that convoy route and many hundreds of British and Allied merchant seamen.*[5]

Around 87 merchant vessels were lost at a cost of 829 lives. At least 29 Russian merchant ships perished in the Arctic Convoys as well as uncounted numbers of warships, aircraft and casualties. Supplies sent by Britain from October 1941 to March 1946 via the Arctic route amounted to 5,218 tanks (1,388 of which were made in Canada), 7,411 aircraft (3,129 from America), 4,932 anti-tank guns, 4,000 rifles and machine guns, 4,338 radio sets, 2,000 field telephones, 1,803 radar sets, 473 million projectiles, 9 torpedo craft, 4 submarines, 14 minesweepers, 10 destroyers and a battleship. Cargo also included American trucks, tractors, telephone wire, railway engines and boots – over four million tons in total.

Ivan Maisky, Russian ambassador to London for most of the war expressed 'the gratitude of the Soviet Government and the Red Army and the whole of the Soviet people' to the men of the Royal and Merchant Navies for the part they had played in the northern convoys when he presented Soviet decorations to British officers and seamen on 20 April 1943.[6] In his memoirs published in 1967 he thanked the seamen who took part in the northern convoys which:

> *gave no small aid to our country at a time of misfortunes and sufferings. It was complicated, difficult and dangerous work....One had to possess great courage, resolution and endurance to undertake such a voyage.*[7]

On 6 November 2014 in St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, the Consul General of Russia in Edinburgh, Mr Andrey Pritsepov presented Russian Ushakov medals 'for bravery and courage in naval theatres' to 34 veterans of the Arctic Convoys. On the following pages are some of their stories.

Background Information

Outbound convoys PQ1-PQ17; JW 51-JW 67: Inbound Convoys QP1-QP15; RA51-RA67: September 1941-September 1942: December 1942-April 1945 Operation FB sent unescorted vessels to Russia at 12 hourly intervals from 29 October- 2 November 1942 but only 5 out of 15 vessels reached the destination.

From 78 convoys data is available for 581 merchant vessels and 368 naval escort and other vessels covering 1622 ship movements.

Photographs and films in the collections of the Imperial War Museum can be viewed on the website: http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/arctic-convoys

There are a number of books on the Arctic Convoys including:

Campbell, Ian (Sir) and MacIntyre, Donald, *The Kola run: a record of Arctic convoys, 1941-1945* (London, 1958).

Edwards, Bernard, *The fighting tramps: the British Merchant Navy goes to war* (London, 1989).

Ruegg, Bob and Hague, Arnold, *Convoys to Russia: Allied convoys and naval surface operations in Arctic waters, 1941-1945* (London, 1994).

Tye, Chris, *The real cold war: featuring 'Jack in Joe's land'* (Gillingham, 1995).

Walling, Michael G., *Forgotten Sacrifice: The Arctic Convoys of World War II* (Oxford, 2012).

Woodman, Richard, *The Arctic convoys, 1941-1945* (London, 1994).

3. *First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound* quoted in Richard Woodman, *The Arctic Convoys 1941-1945* (London, 1994), p. 9.
4. *Scotsman,* 30 September 1943.
5. Ibid., 28 March 1945.
6. Ibid., 21 April 1943.
7. Ivan Maisky, trans. Andrew Rothstein, *Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador The War 1939-43* (London, 1967), p. 315.

Edward Neil Campbell

Edward Campbell has good reason to remember Murmansk – he spent much time there during World War 2. Born in 1916 during the First World War, he attended South Bridge School and James Clark School leaving at the age of 14 to become an apprentice printer with Morrison and Gibb. Having volunteered for war service, in early 1940 he arrived at Butlin's Skegness where he spent a month 'learning how to march'. After a week in Portsmouth he said he had 'a knowledge of boilers'. Sent to Dover to join *HMS Leda* he discovered that the ship had left and he had to travel to North Shields to board this fleet minesweeper where he cleaned and maintained the boilers during minesweeping duties on the East Coast. In May 1940 the *Leda* assisted in the evacuation of Dunkirk, making eight trips and evacuating 2,848 personnel. A number of ratings had to be treated for complete exhaustion – 'nine days and nine nights without sleep'. In October the crew of the *Leda* exchanged places with the crew of *HMS Gossamer* and continued with patrol and minesweeping duties in the North Sea but after a refit and voyages to Londonderry and Belfast in August and September 1941, *Gossamer* joined the escort for Convoy PQ1 at Reykjavik in October. Edward's Russian experiences were about to begin.

The approach to Archangel over the bar of the River Dvina was followed by 24 miles of narrow and very tortuous channel; a two hour trip for fleet minesweepers in an ice free river but in encountering thick ice the *Gossamer* took five hours before arriving on 11 October. The ship then engaged on mine and anti-submarine sweeps from the port before forming part of the local eastern escort for Convoy PQ2. As the ice became thicker it took up to 48 hours to navigate the channel with the aid of tugs with blunt shallow bows. On the morning of the departure of Convoy QP2, *Icarus, Eclipse, Bramble* and *Gossamer* were iced in at Brevennick and it took two icebreakers six hours to clear a passage for the ships. After mid November the ships operated from the Kola Inlet escorting Convoy QP3 with *Gossamer* and *Hussar* and returning to Kirkwall at the end of the month. Edward was glad he had joined as a stoker because 'our watches were in the boilers not on deck'. Following repairs and refitting in the Thames *Gossamer* returned to convoy duty in February 1942 (PQ12), arriving at Kola on 10 March and providing eastern local escort for Convoys QP9, QP10, PQ13 and PQ14 in severe weather and under enemy attack.

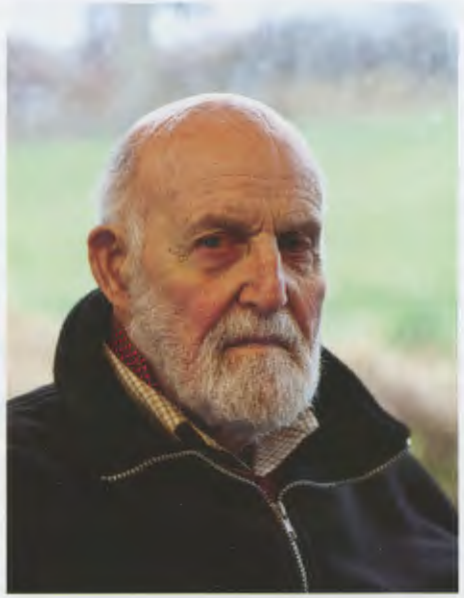
On 30 April *Gossamer* left Murmansk to assist the torpedoed *HMS Edinburgh* (sunk on the following day), rescuing 440 survivors; and in May took part in the escort of Convoy PQ16. The ship's service, however was about to end. On 24 June 1942 *Gossamer* sustained a deadly direct bomb hit during an air attack on Kola Inlet and sank in seven minutes. Edward Campbell was carrying out a boiler clean in the top part of the forward boiler and as the vessel keeled he 'climbed over the guard rails on the starboard side and walked down the ship's side into the sea. Fortunately it was summer and the Russian tugs soon picked us up. I felt lucky to be alive'. Herded into a long low barn with his fellow survivors Edward spent the next months in Murmansk. Still wearing his boiler cleaning clothes, he slept on wooden planks and being summer, the sun shone at midnight. The men had to evacuate the hut and lie in the fields during air raids – 'the Germans flew over hour after hour' and the nearest he came to being killed was when a big piece of shrapnel from a bomb landed about a foot away from him. Food consisted mostly of 'porridge in all forms' and the first meat encountered was yak which 'tasted better than it should have'. When Edward contracted dysentery and lost a stone in weight a Russian woman brought him hard boiled eggs and shchi (cabbage soup). He found the Russians friendly and attended some 'social evenings' of dancing although 'our people didn't like us going'.

Eventually on 24 August Edward Campbell and his fellow survivors took passage with *HMS Marne* but their ordeal continued as on the following day, in the action which sank the German minelayer *Ulm* 100 miles east of Bear Island, three men died and five were wounded by shell splinters. A number of German survivors were rescued. On returning to Scapa Flow on 28 August Edward enjoyed his greatest meal – bacon and eggs – before returning to Portsmouth to learn about electric boilers and engines and to gain his Combined Operations badge (offensive amphibious operations). On the *Queen Elizabeth* he journeyed to America where landing craft had been commissioned and aboard an LC1(L) 135 (Landing Craft Infantry

amphibious assault ship) which carried 200 troops he took part in the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943. Aged 29 Edward Campbell received his discharge papers in 1945 in Portsmouth and he returned to Edinburgh where for a short time he drove trams before taking up his former employment as a compositor. He worked for the *Scotsman* and the *Scottish Daily Mail* and finally his former firm Morrison and Gibb at Tanfield Canonmills; and he still lives in Liberton.

Courtesy of National Museums Scotland

Ian Henry Harrison Davies



As the family of Ian Davies' mother had included sailors, Ian in anticipation of the coming war felt he wanted to serve in the Royal Navy – and did so for 16 years. Born at 9 Newhouse Road, Bovington near Hemel Hempstead on 18 April 1922, he spent his childhood in a variety of homes in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire before leaving school at the age of 14 for employment in Telford Printing Works. Having volunteered for naval service in September 1937 he was called up the following year and undertook periods of training in Chatham, Portsmouth and *HMS Ganges* Shotley where he climbed a 100 feet mast as part of his drilling. One of his memories from this period relates to the occasion when the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret boarded *HMS Kempenfelt* to await their parents' return from Canada in June 1939. Ian provided turpentine and linen for Princess Elizabeth to clean her dress which had been marked when she leaned over the newly painted ship's rail.

Drafted to *HMS Warspite* in the Mediterranean Ian Davies little thought that in the period ahead he would be away from home for so long and circumnavigate the globe in the process. 'For two and a half years I did not see my mother's face'. Having rejoined the Home Fleet in November 1939, *Warspite* participated in the second battle of Narvik in April 1940 and Ian Davies assisted with the naval attacks during the bombardment of the Norwegian harbour and the sinking of eight enemy vessels and one U-boat. Several shore bombardments around Narvik followed on 24 April, before

a return to Scapa Flow. Back in the Mediterranean in May action involved patrolling, covering convoys and battles with the Italian fleet including in March 1941, the battle of Mataplan. Damage to the ship in May necessitated arranging repairs to be made in the USA and thus on 25 June Ian embarked on a voyage which included calls at Colombo, Singapore, Manila and Honolulu before arriving at Seattle and Bremerton Sound. He managed to see something of America before returning to Greenock in October on board *HMS Resolution*.

When Ian next saw action it was in a completely different arena – the waters of the Arctic. He only experienced one convoy – 'it was enough, it was a nightmare'. He does not regard his ship the six inch gun cruiser *HMS Liverpool* as having been suitable for the conditions – 'the *Liverpool* would have done better in the Mediterranean'. *Liverpool* undertook escort duties for Convoys QP10, PQ16 and QP12 in April and May 1942 and while Ian does not recall which convoy he supported, he vividly remembers the conditions – 'if you got into the water you'd be dead within a minute'. The temperature of the sea which he tested by scooping up water in a canvas bucket registered minus 46 degrees; and four inches of ice covered the inside of the bulkhead (the upright wall within the hull of the ship). The men endured 'ghastly, ghastly weather' with the lifeboats covered in blocks of ice. Everyone was on tenterhooks – 'you didn't know if you were going to be torpedoed' – and the men sometimes came to blows, indulging in 'knuckle therapy'. But hot soup sustained them and 'the meals kept coming'. Ian Davies went ashore at Murmansk –'I have never seen such a derelict place'. There he encountered women pulling oil pipes with clamps. He gave one of them a bar of soap but had to mime a washing action as she thought it was food. He later found a bar of chocolate for her but he still does not understand how the Russian people can endure such weather conditions.

Back on board the *Liverpool* the return journey involved the familiar ice chipping duties to keep the fo'c's'le clear at all times. This required 60 men working on either side of the ship – 'we shifted a lot of ice' – but the journey ended Ian's Arctic service for he returned to Greenock and in complete contrast eventually found himself bound for Colombo in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) where he substituted shooting wild dogs for ice clearing. As a regular serviceman Ian Davies continued in the Navy after the end of hostilities on *HMS Ulster* where he underwent further training. As part of a selected group of 40 sent to Dusseldorf he experienced an afternoon session at the Nuremberg trials. Ian was discharged on health grounds in June 1953. Having been married in Bristo Baptist Church Edinburgh he lived first in Musselburgh before moving to Berwick to work for the Hoover Company. A 'Bibleman' all his life Ian now resides near his family in Currie where he continues to witness to his evangelical faith.

Harold O'Neill

When Harold O'Neill told naval officers 'I'll go anywhere it's cold' perhaps he did not have the Arctic in mind! Born on 13 February 1922 in Anfield Plain, Co. Durham, Harold left his local grammar school when 15 years old and soon travelled to London to begin an eventful career. Seeing a notice in a grocery shop – 'strong man wanted' – he started work immediately carrying 12 stone sacks of goods before progressing to canvassing for custom on the outbreak of war – 'come and ration with us'. From London he went to York to make pastilles for Rowntrees, followed by a period in a hotel kitchen before setting up canteens in the south of England for the NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes) and in the north from York around the Northern Command. Further employment as a wine waiter in Tewkesbury and as a bus conductor in Leamington Spa preceded his receipt of call-up papers for the Navy on 13 August 1941.

Harold underwent six weeks of training at *HMS Raleigh* at Torpoint, Cornwall before being sent to *HMS Drake* a training establishment at Devonport. The prospect of higher pay lured him to the Royal Naval Patrol Service based at Lowestoft in a former concert hall where he was armed with a rifle and 40 rounds of ammunition. The RNPS operated small auxiliary vessels such as naval trawlers engaged on

anti-submarine and mine-sweeping operations around Britain and with convoys. When issued with tropical clothing for future duties Harold protested as he had a medical condition acerbated by heat, so he found himself sent to Falmouth and then to Greenock to work as a steward. When the crew heard that Russia was the destination, some deserted. Serving on board *HMS Sumba* Harold looked after the officers – 'I had no training as a steward, I just made up the rules'. The *Sumba*, a whaler of the South Georgia Co. Ltd. (Christian Salvesen & Co., Leith) had been taken over by the Admiralty in March 1940 and at this point formed part of the escort for Convoy PQ13 along with *HMS Silya* and *HMS Sulla* and other vessels.

During the night of 24/25 March 1941, a north easterly gale scattered the vessels over a distance of 150 nautical miles and caused severe icing making the whalers top heavy and in danger of capsizing. The *Sumba*, hampered by the effect of the magnetic North Pole on naval instruments, did not have enough fuel to reach Russia, so strictly against orders, broke radio silence with the result that *HMS Fury* came to assist. In a 'marvellous bit of seamanship' the *Fury* refuelled the *Sumba* which subsequently caught up with other ships. 'Then the Germans came – I was lashed to the funnel chopping ice'. As soon as Harold had finished clearing his seven feet stretch he had to start again as everything had iced up. Enemy machine gun fire erupted around him but 'I took no flipping notice and carried on'. He thinks he was the last one to sight *HMS Sulla* which just disappeared after being last seen in the evening on 24 March. The ship's empty deck had been covered with ice.

Further north the convoy struck ice but a Russian ship cleared a path through. By this time food stocks had frozen causing severe hunger but eventually the *Sumba* arrived in the Kola Inlet and tied up alongside the Russian ship. Harold toured the ship and to his surprise saw a crew of men and women. He quotes Russian Admiral Golovko as saying it was 'a bloody miracle how you got this ship here'; and says the Admiral played and won a game of Chinese Chequers with him. Very unusually Harold received a Russian identity card which he still proudly displays though he never saw the rescue ship's crew again. (*HMS Sumba* transferred to the Soviet Union in February 1942, being renamed T-106 and returned in 1947.) Convoy PQ13 lost five ships along with one minesweeping whaler. A month later Harold O'Neill found himself at Scapa, having sailed on *HMS Liverpool* accompanying Convoy QP10; and although attacked by aircraft for three days he remembers nothing of the return journey or of other voyages to Russia. He does, however recall a serious injury sustained when he stuck to ice which removed his skin; and how he narrowly escaped loosing an arm due to the resultant infection.

Before being discharged on 21 May 1946 Harold served on various vessels including *HMS Carrick,* an old sailing boat being used as a prison in Port Glasgow and on *HMS Caroline* in Belfast. The end of the war saw him engaged in minesweeping duties on *HMS St Tudno*, clearing the Thames estuary and the waters around Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Harold O'Neill returned to the Consett area of his native County Durham and to the grocery trade in 1947, but 30 years later he moved to Haddington and aged 55 years embarked on yet another adventure as gardener/caretaker and then estate factor.

Cyril Davison Deas

When Edinburgh schoolboy Cyril Deas became an apprentice joiner in 1936 he could not have envisaged that he would soon be working in extremes of temperature not experienced in his native city. Born on 29 June 1922 at 46 Lanark Road Edinburgh, Cyril and 51 classmates attended Longstone Primary school then Tynecastle High. Aged 14 years – 'left school on Friday, started work on Monday' – he joined the company of Neil McLeod and Sons. On the outbreak of war in 1939 Cyril and two friends attempted to enlist in the Royal Air Force, having been advised by his father, a twice-gassed veteran of the First World War, not to join the army. Being a 'bound apprentice' his services were refused but in 1940 he travelled to Glasgow, said nothing about his apprenticeship, signed for the navy and travelled to Portsmouth by train sitting on his suitcase in the corridor all the way. There he tasted 'horrible steamed fish and white sauce' and had his first 'drink'!

Six weeks of drilling took place at the Civil Service holiday camp on Hayling Island off Portsmouth with Cyril being appointed class captain (because he knew how to fire a rifle) before further schooling in Portsmouth to learn about engineering – 'What is steam? It is an elastic invisible fluid'. He next embarked on a three days' train journey

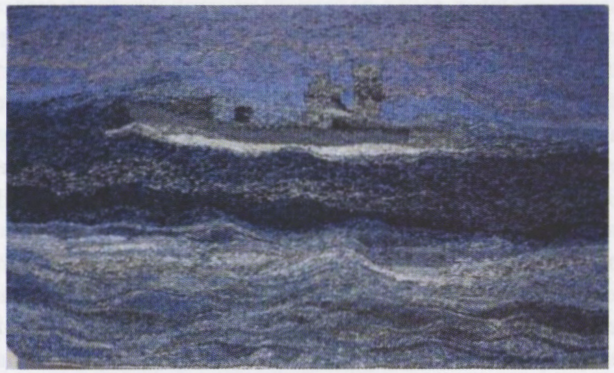
to Kirkwall and then a ferry to the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow where in February 1941 he was assigned to *HMS King George V* as a second class stoker. Stokers feed fuel to the boilers and work in the engine rooms. Equipped with eight three-drum type small-tube boilers housed in pairs of boiler rooms placed side by side each with a turbine room astern of them, the *King George V* had a total heating surface of 78,144 sq. ft. The 416 ton boiler installation produced more than 100,000 shaft horsepower giving a top speed of 28 knots, making the vessel the fastest battleship in the British fleet. Cyril saw his posting as 'a good move', the vessel being the lead battleship of its class and flying the flag of Admiral Tovey Commander-in-Chief of Britain's Home Fleet. He describes Tovey, soon to be the officer directly in charge of the complex Russian convoy arrangements, as 'very good'.

Cyril Deas also had another job as a 'skimmer driver' operating the motor boats which transported people from one ship to another or conveyed visitors aboard. For example, on 2 August 1941 on his return from Russia, Mr Harry Hopkins an adviser of President Roosevelt, spent two nights on the *King George V* followed by King George VI who stayed for three days; and in 1942 visitors included King Peter of Yugoslavia, the King of the Hellenes, the Turkish Ambassador, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Work in the boiler rooms, however, took precedence when operations were underway. In March 1941 *King George V* provided distant cover for Operation Claymore, a Commando Raid on the Lofoten Islands off the north-west coast of Norway to destroy fish oil factories that produced glycerine used in the manufacture of enemy explosives; and she also escorted Atlantic convoys that month. Cyril remembers that in May when Churchill gave the order 'to go after the Bismark', the enemy's largest battleship, the fleet remained at 'action stations' for four days but to no avail due to the heavy weather obscuring the bombers' ability to locate the vessel in a Norwegian fjord. When the Bismark broke out of her hiding place *King George V* took part in the action on 24-27 May 1941 which resulted in the sinking of the German ship; and after repairs and adjustments to her guns, attacked enemy shipping in the Glom Fjord, Norway, in October 1941.

Cyril Deas' further experiences of the dangerous Arctic seas came in March 1942 with Convoy PQ12, as Admiral Tovey believed that the other mighty German battleship *Tirpitz* would attempt to intercept the convoy, but aircraft from *Victorious* prevented *Tirpitz* from leaving Norway. The convoy encountered the hazards of damage by loose-packed ice and squally weather; while Convoys PQ13 and QP9 ran the gauntlet of severe gales, snowstorms and enemy air and surface attacks resulting in the loss of more than a quarter of the convoy and almost 30,000 tons of Allied merchant shipping. *King George V* provided distant cover for Convoys PQ14 and QP10 but on 1 May 1942 the dense fog plaguing the progress of PQ15 caused *HMS Punjabi* to collide with *King George V* damaging 40 feet of her bow. *Punjabi* was cut in two with much loss of life. After repairs undertaken in Liverpool, *King George V* returned to Scapa Flow on 1 July 1942 when the ship's new radars were trialled.

On 19 December she sailed from Scapa Flow to provide distant cover for Convoy JW 51A (the titles had been changed from PQ to JW, and QP to RA for return, for security reasons); and later for JW53 and RA 53 the latter comprising 30 merchant ships which sailed from Kola Inlet on 1 March 1943. This convoy experienced severe weather with most of the passage taking place in a full gale causing the convoy to drop behind schedule and ships to straggle before arriving at Loch Ewe on 14 March. Cyril had a camera on board and he recorded those Arctic conditions which iced the guns preventing them from firing. 'We had to invent a spike – a long hose with a spike on the end with hot steam' to de-ice the armaments. He remembers once going to Marmansk harbour but 'there was nothing there, nothing to sell'; but at Reykjavik he encountered Mexican jumping beans for the first time and smoked a cigar! However his days of the Arctic cold were coming to an end for in May 1943 *King George V* and *Howe* were temporarily moved to Gibraltar in preparation for Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily.

Cyril Deas progressed to become a leading stoker and played a part in the preparation for the D-Day landings by helping to transport two prefabricated or artificial military harbours (Mulberry) in sections across the English Channel and assembled off the coast of Normandy. His final duties were undertaken in temperatures far removed from those of the Arctic as he sailed on *HMS Sefton* through the Mediterranean, Suez Canal, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to Bombay (Mumbai). While in the Pacific and China seas news came of the end of the war and Cyril eventually returned to Portsmouth where he received his discharge papers in 1946. Back in Edinburgh he found employment as a joiner in Cox's Glue Works but he remained on the RN reserve list for the welcome weekly payment of 7/6d. Little did he think that in 1952 he would be recalled for service in Korea though fortunately this time the farthest he travelled was Denmark before returning to work for Stuart's Granolithic Co. Ltd – the largest concrete flooring company in the UK.



Ronald George Madden

Ronald Madden feels that his 'self-discipline' got him through his wartime service, especially when in Arctic waters. Born on 8 October 1922 in Kennington, London he attended school in Streatham in the London Borough of Lambeth. After leaving school he entered the Royal Navy and was sent to Falfield in Gloucestershire to the Coding School named *HMS Cabbala* to learn coding and ciphering. (In a code each word in a message is replaced with a code word or symbol but in a cipher each letter in a message is replaced with a cipher letter or symbol.) After three months of training Ronald joined *HMS Worcester,* an Admiralty Modified W-class destroyer launched in 1919 and operating as part of the 16th Destroyer Flotilla based at Harwich. 'Most of the work was convoy support to the East Coast convoys and patrolling from the Thames estuary to Portsmouth'.

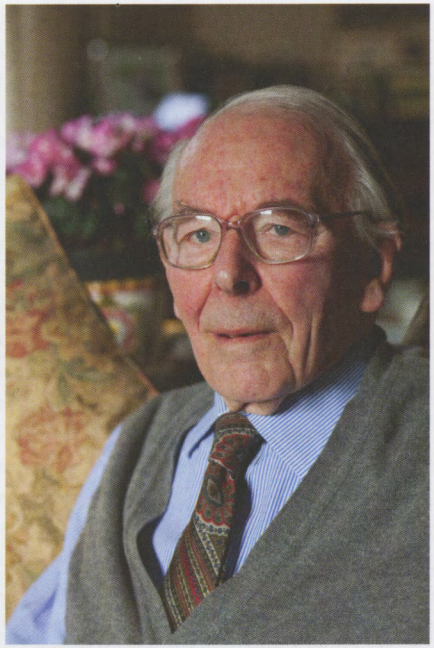
In March 1941, however, while in the North Sea with *HMS Whitshed* en route to join Convoy FS29 the ships were diverted by an E-boat decoy operation which allowed a German attack on the convoy when *Worcester* and *Whitshed* were too far away to intervene with the resultant sinking of two merchant ships. Convoy duties occupied the rest of the year but in February 1942 the Flotilla was placed on alert pending an attempt by German battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* to return to Germany via the Dover Straits. In the ensuing engagement *Worcester* sustained major structural damage with fatal and other casualties and had to return to Harwich for repair and conversion to Short Range Escort. With his ship back in service in September, Ronald Madden took passage to Scapa Flow to join the Home Fleet and as part of Group Force P, to establish a fuelling base at Lowe Sound, Spitzbergen for use by the Arctic convoy escort ships. The fighting destroyer escort provided protection for PQ and QP convoys through the most dangerous part of the journey but because these ships would be sailing a greater distance than usual, refuelling was essential.

On 20 September *Worcester* left Lowe Sound to assist with covering the passage of QP14 from Kola to Loch Ewe. Ronald describes the experience as 'pretty awful – rough seas, weather conditions pretty foul'. 'We were not quite prepared for it. We didn't realise what we were up against'. In such dangerous conditions 'one slight mistake and you were overboard'; and being an old ship 'we were living on top of one another'. In addition to the gale which buffeted the ships, on 24 September the presence of U-boats was detected. The minesweeper *Leda* received two torpedo hits and a torpedo hit *HM Somali* while *Worcester* participated in inflicting damage on five U-boats. After Force P left the convoy for Iceland, wind, sleet and snow increased causing the sinking of the *Somali* (towed for 80 hours though 420 miles) with the loss of 47 lives. During the next two months *Worcester* undertook Home Fleet duties before being deployed in December to provide cover for Convoy RA51 which sailed from Kola on 30 December to arrive at Loch Ewe on 11 January 1943. The vessel then returned to Flotilla service at Harwich.

During 1943 Ronald Madden continued with his coding and ciphering work in the wireless office under the bridge of the ship with one other colleague, sharing the four hour watches throughout the day and night. In December, however, while undertaking interception patrolling *Worcester* was mined off Smiths Knoll and her stern structure destroyed. Towed to Yarmouth she was declared beyond economic repair in April 1944. Ronald continued with his duties on board *HMS Winchester*, another W-class destroyer launched in 1918 and by this time part of the Rosyth Escort Force deployed in coastal convoy escort service in the North Sea. 'We would go out to the Bass Rock, muster the convoys, check the speed of the slowest ship, take them to Portsmouth and then return'. In February 1945 when the *Winchester* was reduced to Reserve, Ronald Madden spent the remainder of his service in the Far East in Pacific waters, returning home on the aircraft carrier *HMS Indefatigable* in September 1946.

His memories of the period following demobilisation are unhappy as he remained unemployed for 18 months and he encountered the unwillingness of prospective employers to credit his war experience or accept him for business training. He eventually did find office work and having decided to pursue relevant studies, in the early 1960s he qualified as a Chartered Secretary, becoming an associate member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA). Having first taken up residence in North Berwick, in 2004 Ronald Madden moved to Edinburgh where he still lives. Of his war years he reflects 'I just pray and hope one will not see that again'.

Colin Brown



Instead of going to Cambridge University where he had been awarded a place in 1941, Colin Brown experienced a different kind of training in the Royal Navy. Born on 7 April 1924 in Netherby, Galashiels, he was educated first at St Mary's School Melrose then Loretto School Musselburgh before being sent to *HMS Ganges* at Shotley. There he underwent nine months of basic training with the customary 'square bashing' before joining *HMS Sheffield* in October 1942. In November *Sheffield* was under repair at Scapa Flow following escort duties for the Allied landings in North Africa but her next escort assignment entailed the provision of cruiser cover in Arctic waters for the 15 merchant ships and fleet oiler of Convoy JW51A which left Loch Ewe on 15 December 1942 and arrived safely off Kola Inlet on Christmas Day.

However Colin Brown and his fellow sailors were soon to be involved in action against ships of the Nazi Kriegsmarine – 'the so-called Battle of the Barents Sea'. On 27 December *Sheffield* sailed from Murmansk to assist with cover for returning Convoy RA51. On the same day a gale scattered incoming Convoy JW51B which had earlier been spotted by a patrolling enemy aircraft before the storm obscured its position. The convoy carried tanks and other vehicles, fighter and bomber planes, fuel and various supplies; and having been re-sighted by German submarine U-354 on 30 December the *Lützow*, *Admiral Hipper*, and six destroyers sortied from Altafjord, Norway to intercept. In the Arctic gloom with Admiral Robert L. Burnett on board the *Sheffield*, the British ships engaged in action on 31 December against the German ships in the Barents Sea with the *Sheffield* sinking the destroyer *Friedrich Eckoldt* and damaging the *Hipper*. All 15 merchant ships eventually reached Murmansk though two British warships (*Bramble* and *Achates*) had been lost. Hitler's fury at the failure of the German operation caused his complete loss of confidence in surface forces; the main threat to the convoys after this incident therefore came from U-boats.

Colin Brown remembers working in pairs on board ship as a safety measure and that he was paired 'with the heir to the Russian throne', Andrew Romanov, great nephew of Tsar Nicholas II. They 'varnished numbers on the same gun in Y turret'. Conditions were 'very crowded' since a vessel originally intended to accommodate 700-800 men had at that time to carry 1100-1200; but the food was good with lots of beef. In that winter of 1942-3 Colin experienced 'rough weather' with the spray from the bows turning instantly to ice; and he spent most of the time on watch – 'four hours on, four hours off'. He had his own camera with him, a German model bought in 1938; and processed the film himself in his cabin. After the Barents Sea engagement the *Sheffield* provided distant cover for Convoys JW52 and RA52; but having sailed from Seidisfjord on 15 February 1943 to join JW53 in February 1943, the ship sustained considerable structural damage during dreadful weather on 18 February and had to undergo repairs at the John Brown shipyard on the Clyde. At this point Colin Brown, who had been identified for officer training, departed for *HMS King Alfred* at Hove and then to the Royal Naval College Greenwich as a midshipman. An experience he recalls is of being suspended from ropes 100 feet above ground while painting a ship.

Colin next joined *HMS Icarus* which had been transferred to the Canadian C2 Escort Group based at Londonderry Nova Scotia and St John's Newfoundland – named 'Newfy John' by the men. He served for three years as Gunnery Officer and Captain's Secretary during the defence of the Atlantic convoys against U-boats; his longest trip lasting 39 days. In May 1944 *Icarus* joined 14th Escort Group for duty based at Plymouth in support of the Normandy D-Day landings. Following a refit at Wallsend in August the ship returned to the defence of coastal convoys in November before being sent to the 3rd Submarine Flotilla in the Holy Loch in June 1945. Colin Brown then left the *Icarus* to join *HMT Marmion* engaged on Fleet Minesweeping duties cleaning Le Havre and the North Sea from Stavanger, Norway. On the completion of his war service he continued his naval commitment as a Royal Naval Reserve until 1957; thus completing 15 years in total and attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander. In 1947 he had discovered that he would have to wait for two years before he could take his place at Cambridge, so 'needing the money' entered Leeds University to study textiles – his family had been engaged in the Scottish Woollen Industry since the 1700s. Employed first by Crombie in Aberdeen, Colin moved to the Borders in 1954 to the firm of Gardiner of Selkirk. He now lives in Darnick.

David Smith Miller

'You're indestructible' was how an officer described one Scots Royal Marine when he returned to Chatham in 1946 to await his discharge. Born on 7 December 1924 to parents living at 7 Wheatfield Road Edinburgh, David 'Dusty' Miller attended Roseburn Primary school before winning a bursary to Boroughmuir. The disruption to schooling caused by the outbreak of war in 1939 encouraged David to leave while in his fourth year of secondary education for employment as a clerk first in the office of William Home Cook and Co. Chartered Accountants of 42 North Castle Street and then in Manclark's clothing factory in Hutchison Road. He hankered, however, to become a fighter pilot, but as he had not yet attained the required age of 18 years, he volunteered instead for the Royal Marines in August 1942, enlisting on 21 October at the Chatham Division where he remained until 5 December 1943.

'A marine is a soldier's sailor' with the motto 'Per Mare, Per Terram' (By Sea, By Land) and no one qualified as having passed the PFT (Physical Fitness Test) without having undergone nine months of gruelling training. For David Miller this entailed rising at 6.00am, running for seven miles, followed by exercises such as pole-lifting – all before breakfast. Then there were the 20 miles of forced marching, the challenges of assault courses and shooting practices where the penalty for failure was another march! David made sure he hit the target the required number of times! He did, however, maintain enough energy to fit in trips to local dance halls for 'the jigging'. Finally, having suffered the disappointment of not being selected to serve on *HMS Ajax* and being sent on signalling duties and a despatch rider course instead, David Miller boarded *HMS Sheffield* at Liverpool and on 6 December 1943 (the day before his nineteenth birthday) arrived at Scapa Flow to undertake Arctic Convoy escort covering duties.

The contingent of around 40 marines was charged with loading the ship's armaments – 12 BL six inch Mark XIII battery guns (triple mounts), eight four inch (double mounts), four three pounder and eight two pounder on quadruple mounts and torpedo tubes. With marines and Canadians on board accommodation was cramped with hammocks hung in available spaces – David slept above the dynamos. On 12 December he discovered the extent of the Arctic cold when *HMS Sheffield*, a light cruiser fitted with radar in August 1938, provided cover, along with the *Belfast* and *Norfolk*, for Convoy JW55A – 'if you put your hand on a rail you left your flesh on it. This was the suicide run'. Detaching from the convoy, on 19 December the ship arrived safely at the Kola Inlet, leaving there four days later to shadow the incoming JW55A and the returning RA55A convoys. The men worked in shifts – 'four on, four off' – but on Boxing Day it was 'action stations' as the mighty German battleship *Scharnhorst* screened by five destroyers had been despatched to intercept Convoy JW55B after its departure from Loch Ewe on 20 December. A U-boat had located the convoy on Christmas Day. On the morning of 26 December in thick darkness in company with *HMSS Norfolk* and *Belfast*, *HMS Sheffield* detected the now unaccompanied *Scharnhorst* which *Norfolk* hit causing the battleship to turn away but at noon a further encounter took place during which *Norfolk* was hit and *Sheffield* showered with splinters. The latter had to disengage when damage to the port inner shaft caused a reduction in speed. Torpedoed later in the day by *HMS Duke of York* the *Scharnhorst* finally sank.

Having returned to the Kola Inlet on 27 December *Sheffield* sailed for Scapa then Liverpool for repairs on 25 January 1944, rejoining the Home Fleet on 16 February for interception and patrol duty in the North Sea and North West Approaches. The ship undertook further Arctic voyages including the attack on the battleship *Tirpitz* but by this time David Miller was no longer aboard. He had volunteered for the paratroopers and after months of further training, found himself in the Far East serving in the Eastern Fleet first with the *Queen Elizabeth* at Trincomalee and the Andaman Sea then *HMS Phoebe* in Burma. Finally, having refused offers to re-enlist he received his discharge papers on 2 July 1946. David Miller returned to Edinburgh resuming his employment in Manclark, moving to the Ceylon Rubber Mill, Russell Road and then running his own coal business for nearly 20 years. He next embarked on a new career in local government, becoming before his retirement, Assistant Director of Cleansing for Midlothian. On 15 January 2015 David Miller began another adventure as he left Edinburgh for a new life in Portugal.

John Martin Paddle

Long before he encountered the icy Arctic waters John Paddle had travelled hundreds of miles and stored up colourful memories which he recalls as if the events occurred yesterday. Born in Surrey in 1923, he left school at the age of fourteen and began an apprenticeship as an electrical engineer – a 'travelling apprentice' – so named because he would receive a telegram on a Saturday evening telling him where to go to work on the Monday. A first attempt by a colleague and himself to join the Royal Air Force failed as they were told they were in 'protected jobs' but an application to the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm succeeded and in spite of his examination in Southampton being interrupted by an air raid and evacuation to the cellar of a pub where some of the wares were sampled, John enlisted at the beginning of January 1941, two months before his eighteenth birthday.

Four weeks of basic training followed at *Royal Arthur,* Skegness (a former Butlin's Holiday Camp), then *HMS Vernon* at Portsmouth for torpedo and electrical instruction enlivened by evacuation to Roedean Girls School at Brighton – although the girls had previously vacated the building! Sent to Crail John sailed daily from Anstruther on the fishing boat *Alecs Watt* to Dalgety Bay, manning the heavy pumps for the diver who recovered dummy torpedoes dropped by aircraft as well as gathering lobsters. Following a short course at Credenhill in Shropshire, he returned to Donibristle to join a small unit working on radar development; then back to Shropshire to a remote farmer's field where he and his companions were accommodated in a long galvanised shed previously occupied by chickens and which they had to clean and whitewash before use. Eventually John Paddle sailed on the *Queen Elizabeth* to Halifax, Nova Scotia, a key base for Allied warships; and from there to Rhode Island in the United States of America, location for the formation in April 1943 of the 846 Naval Air Squadron with its motto 'Semper Instans (Always threatening)'.

John Paddle served as an electrical engineer in the squadron with its Grumman Avenger torpedo bombers; Wildcat V fighters being added later. He recalls the unit as being self contained, ready to go anywhere with everyone mixing and all 'mucking in'. Assigned to *HMS Tracker* in January 1944, two months later the squadron took part in its first convoy to Murmansk (JW58), the merchantmen having left Loch Ewe on 27 March. 'It was bloody cold', John remembers. During this trip a seaman fell overboard and vanished immediately and an Avenger landed badly on the deck of the *Tracker* and burst into flames. The fire raged for fifteen minutes before being extinguished and during that time an American warship due to be given to the Russians came alongside to pick up survivors but had to be warned off because of the immediate danger. 'We only realised after that the fire was right on top of where our six ready torpedoes were in racks. If they had been ignited there would have been a terrific explosion'. John describes the experience as 'frightening'; and years later he discovered that film star Douglas Firbanks Jr had been on board the American vessel as a junior officer.

While in action – battle stations – everyone carried out the duties non-stop and John remembers seeing men sleeping 'standing up'. During this voyage aircraft from the *Tracker* flew 132 sorties in 139 flying hours, destroying several enemy aircraft, attacking eight U-boats and contributing to the successful delivery of the convoy of 40 American, one Norwegian and nine British ships to Murmansk. After two days rest and recuperation at Vaenga the *Tracker* formed part of the escort for the returning Convoy RA58 which left Kola on 7April 1944; air patrols thwarting U-boat attacks to enable its safe arrival at Loch Ewe on 14 April 1944. John Paddle and his colleagues had contended with the usual severe frost to maintain a steady stream of aircraft for combat.

A diversion from the Arctic waters occurred in June 1944 when the *Tracker* formed part of the naval screen for the D-Day Normandy landings. However damage sustained due to a collision with the Canadian frigate *HMCS Teme* resulted in John's squadron disembarking to RAF Limavady airfield Northern Ireland where daily air patrols searched for U-boats. A month later 846 squadron was assigned to *HMS Trumpeter* which undertook the laying of mines off Norway until September 1944. In March 1945 John Paddle was again on route for Russia as part of the escort for Convoy JW65. Enemy attacks continued in spite of the near cessation of war, with U-boats operating in the Bear Island passage and off the Kola inlet. Air patrols flew by day from the *Trumpeter* (nightly from the *Campania*) but dense snow showers and squalls prevented flights on 20 March resulting in the loss of one ship to a U-boat torpedo. Further losses occurred before the convoy reached Murmansk but John

Paddle's Arctic voyages were now reaching conclusion. Drafted to *HMS Shah* he served with the East Indies Fleet until the end of hostilities with Japan; and then returned to Britain in October 1945 and qualified as an Educational and Vocational Training Instructor. Finally sent to Easthaven near Dundee to work with people awaiting demobilisation, he received his own discharge on 5 July 1946.

Now living in Dunfermline, John Paddle maintains his loyalty to, and interest in, his former squadron and over the years has attended events and reunions and revisited places associated with his war-time experiences. He has added the Russian Ushakov medal to the others he proudly displays. Of the Russian people during the war years he observes: 'the Russian people were resilient – they had to be'.

David Dunsmuir

Thanks to his navy days there are two foods David Dunsmuir will not eat – margarine and corned beef. David moved to Edinburgh from Blantyre where he was born on 31 August 1925 and attended James Gillespie's Boys School then Boroughmuir. In 1940 he began a career with Waddie and Co manufacturing stationers and printers until being called up for service in the navy in September 1943. At Fareham near Portsmouth he underwent three months of the customary training and carried out fire-watching duties before being sent to nearby Whale Island to learn about gunnery. At the beginning of 1944 he embarked on *HMS Diadem* at Wallsend-on-Tyne.

The Dido-class light cruiser *Diadem* had been launched in August 1942 completing her trials in January 1944. David Dunsmuir and his fellow gunners manned eight (133mm) dual guns, six (20mm) AA guns, three pairs (37/40mm) pom-pom quad guns and two (533 mm) triple Torpedo Tubes. In February the ship joined the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow to participate in convoy defence and interception in the northwest approaches. On 29 March *Diadem* became part of the escort for Convoy JW58 along with aircraft carriers *Activity* and *Tracker* screened by the destroyers *Impulsive, Inconstant, Obedient, Offa, Onslaught, Onslow, Oribi, Orwell, Saumarez, Serapis,*

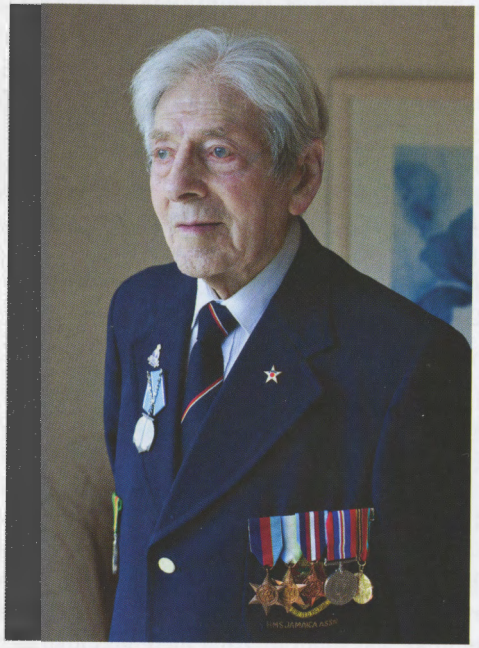
Scorpion, Opportune and the Norwegian *Stord*. Part of the mission was to ensure the safe delivery of the American cruiser *USS Milwaukee* (later renamed *Murmansk*) to the Soviet Northern Fleet. *Diadem* formed part of the escort for the returning Convoy RA58 which reached Loch Ewe on 14 April.

David describes the voyages as 'relatively uneventful' but nonetheless it was 'pretty cold' with no chance of survival for anyone going overboard. The gunners kept watch early in the morning or at night for enemy aircraft and during the day for submarines; and they assisted with ice-chipping although the vessel 'being bigger it was not so bad'. (Smaller ships capsized more quickly under the weight of ice.) At that time of the year daylight lasted for a few hours but the strength of the water remained enormous, the bulwarks bending under the weight of the waves. While the *Diadem* could sail at 32.25 knots (60 km/h) she had to keep to the speed of the slowest merchant ship, seven knots. 'Drastic living conditions' meant David slept on deck as hammocks were reserved for 'damage control' – plugging any holes made under attack. He wore a duffle coat and any other clothing he had and later a heated suit which could be plugged in at the guns; with an anti-flash gun on his head under his helmet. But with certain exceptions the food was good and hot as the ship had a galley and baked fresh bread (a white pan loaf). 'You knew it was Saturday – lentil soup, corned beef and tart'.

On 20 April 1944 the *Diadem* sailed to Murmansk with a strong escort to recover the empty merchant ships lying in Russian wharves. David Dunsmuir went ashore briefly but thought the conditions there 'terrible' with no buildings standing and it 'reminded me of the High Street in "gardy-loo" times'. He did not meet any local people, only the men on the tankers. Convoy RA59 comprised 43 merchant ships along with the escort which included Russian destroyers, minesweepers and submarine chasers. Weather conditions proved hazardous with enemy air and U-boat attacks but the convoy passed safely, one half going to Loch Ewe and the other to Tail o' the Bank at the Clyde. The Home Fleet, however, had to prepare for other action and David departed from the Clyde on 3 June for operations in the Bristol Channel as support for the D-Day landings. On 6 June the gunners bombarded the Battery at Beny sur Mer and in the subsequent days provided naval gunfire support as required; later bombarding the Caen area of the French coast and participating in operations in the Bay of Biscay.

Before returning to Scapa Flow in September 1944 David Dunsmuir enjoyed a complete change of scenery and temperature as *HMS Diadem* sailed to the West Indies on a 'flag showing' exercise to Bermuda, Barbados, Trinidad, St Kitts and St Vincent. Ordered not to sunbathe the stokers disobeyed, suffered blisters and were put on a charge for 'self-inflicted wounds'. On rejoining the Home Fleet the ship formed part of the escort for Convoy JW60 which sailed through calm though fog-bound waters to arrive at Kola Inlet on 23 September. A few days later *Diadem* accompanied returning Convoy RA60 which avoided the dozen U-boats sent to intercept, although subsequently enemy torpedoes sank two ships before the convoy reached Loch Ewe in early October. David continued to serve in northern waters until the end of the war but he did not receive his discharge until 17 December 1946. He returned to Edinburgh to his original employer Waddie where he worked for 47 years and rose 'from licking stamps to become a Director'.

James Simpson



A certificate commemorating the liberation of Norway on 8 May 1945 is one of James Simpson's treasured possessions, especially as he had not then reached his 24th birthday. Originally from Inveresk where his father farmed, Jim was born on 10 November 1921 and attended Musselburgh Grammar before leaving school in 1936 to help on the farm. When his family moved to Edinburgh he became a joiner's apprentice with John Lonie and Sons; one of his jobs being to assist with the boarding up of the stained glass windows of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral on the outbreak of war. Aged 19 years Jim received his call-up papers in 1940 when he was sent to the Orkney Islands for six months to build camps for the Army and RAF, before being despatched to *HMS Devonport* for three months of naval training. There he learned about damage control such as shoring up bulkheads and repairing the destruction sustained under attack. He returned to Campbeltown for nine months to build dummy conning towers bolted on to rafts for the fleet gunners to practise firing against – a conning tower being a raised platform on a ship or submarine from which an officer could command the vessel. After nine months Jim boarded his new home the cruiser *HMS Devonshire*.

As part of the Home Fleet the main operations undertaken by this heavy cruiser involved covering the carrier raids against the German-occupied Norwegian coast; and searching for the battleship *Tirpitz*. In July 1944, for example, *Devonshire* provided cover for unsuccessful air operations against the German ship then lying in Altenfjord Norway; and in August assisted the air attacks on the German airfield at Gossen and an air minelay between Lepsoy and Haramsa. Also in that month, along with other Home Fleet destroyers the *Devonshire* provided distant cover for the passage of Convoy JW59 to Kola Inlet and for the returning Convoy RA59A. 'We stayed in the outer ring of the convoy to try to stop an attack or to prevent a ship getting within the convoy. We had to keep moving because it was a big ship'. 'We were often attacked by torpedo bombers (Junkers 88) – they went for the big ship. They came over at dusk, 16 or 20 attacking the convoys'.

A diversion came in September 1944. Jim and colleagues received a signal to return to the ship while they were ashore at Scapa at the cinema. As the *Devonshire* had already left they had to follow in motor boats and climb aboard up rope ladders to be ready to escort the *Queen Mary* bearing Winston Churchill to Halifax Nova Scotia for talks about the D-Day landings. On their return they resumed escort duties for mine laying and attacks on enemy shipping round the Norwegian coast. By now Jim had been promoted to Petty Officer. He remembers terrible weather conditions often causing 40-60 feet high waves. 'On the upper deck in bad weather lifelines were strung around the ship to grab on to and this was for nine months of the year'. The ship's ventilators filled up with water and froze. But the food was quite good – 'the only thing I didn't like was mutton' – and there was always the daily tot of rum though not everyone liked the taste.

On 12 May 1945 following the ending of the European hostilities, *HMS Devonshire* formed part of the escort from Rosyth to Oslo for *HMS Apollo* with the Crown Prince of Norway aboard; followed in June by escort duties for King Hakon who entered the fjord of his capital to a tremendous welcome. The ship returned to Plymouth and as the war against Japan had not ended James Simpson transferred to *HMS Jamaica* bound for the Far East and sailed there although hostilities had now ceased. He spent a year picking up prisoners of war from the islands before being demobbed in November 1946. On his return to Edinburgh he found a job with Shop Fronts Great Britain before making a career in the building trade – 'I spent the rest of my life building houses'. He retired as a director of the Walker Group at the age of 72 and still lives in the house he built in Edinburgh.

Colin Wilkinson

In 1943 Colin Wilkinson feared that his need to wear spectacles might prevent him from becoming a naval officer. Born on 11 October 1924 in Ossett Yorkshire, Colin spent his early years in Egypt (where his father worked as an accountant for an American firm) before winning a scholarship to Leeds Grammar School. After leaving school in 1941 he joined the Civil Service as a clerical officer but he also applied successfully for a University Naval Division (UND) course to enable him to qualify for a naval commission. Colin began his course at Liverpool University in January 1943 and remembers spending part of the time undertaking naval training and part studying subjects such as Geography and French. As 'naval officers did not wear spectacles' he omitted to disclose at his medical examination that he wore them. 'I was able to read the eyesight charts well enough not to raise questions and of course I removed my glasses before any parades'. By the time he took up his first long-term assignment 'no one questioned my use of glasses'.

After six months Colin qualified and became an Ordinary Seaman in the Royal Navy in July 1943 before being posted to *HMS Ganges* the shore training establishment near Ipswich where he had to undergo a number of physical tests such as cross-country running and climbing 'a very high mast – terrifying for someone like me with no head for heights'. 'I found a sailor's bell-bottom trousers and jerkin were made of a coarse material which was quite itchy and that was another incentive to pass the training stage'. Sent next to serve for a few weeks each in *HMS Queen Elizabeth* and *HMS Renown* in Scapa Flow he helped to supply huge shells to one of the 15 inch guns when being fired during exercises; and he took

a turn at steering the ship, and maintaining and altering a course. After a further session at *HMS King Alfred* near Brighton, in January 1944 Colin Wilkinson received his commission as a Midshipman RNVR – 'in common parlance a "snotty"' – and departed for Londonderry to join the newly commissioned frigate *HMS Narbrough*, loaned by the USA. To his delight he had his own cabin and a bunk instead of a hammock on this brand new and well equipped vessel crewed by 180 ratings and eight officers and possessing three three-inch guns, a number of oerlikon machine guns, depth charges and 'a weapon called a hedgehog which fired a number of explosive projectiles'.

As part of the 15th Escort Group *Narbrough* met incoming Atlantic convoys to protect them against U-boats and aircraft and operated on anti U-boat searches but in late May 1944 the ship became one of the escorts for the convoy transporting American troops to Normandy for the D-Day landings. When the American troopship *USS Susan B Anthony* struck a mine half-way across the English Channel, Colin and his colleagues had to assist with rescue operations and managed to evacuate several hundred soldiers from the sinking ship. During another voyage to Normandy 'a tug which was towing a section of the Mulberry artificial harbour being built by the Allies to facilitate the landing of the troops and supplies made a mistake and caused the harbour section to hit our bow, producing a large hole above the waterline. We returned to Portsmouth dockyard for repairs and the crew enjoyed a fortnight's leave. During my leave my mother died suddenly at the age of 44, whilst only she and I were in the house, and I was absolutely devastated'.

After the Atlantic and North Seas *Narbrough* next encountered the perils of the Arctic waters; being assigned as escort for Convoys JW61 and RA61 in October and November 1944. 'It wasn't fun. It meant going from Ireland up into the Arctic Circle, past the north of Norway and Spitzbergen, to reach Murmansk in North Russia. I have never experienced cold like it, with sea water breaking over the bows and freezing so as to cover the decks with ice at least a foot thick'. The challenge was to 'make sure you didn't slide overboard'. The ship's bridge was in the open and 'we sometimes wondered if the weight of ice would cause us to turn turtle, especially as there had been rumours of such a fate befalling another ship'. On reaching Murmansk the ship anchored until the return journey and the crew were not allowed to go ashore. All 30 ships of JW61 and the 33 of RA61 arrived safely with the latter reaching Loch Ewe on 9 November 1944.

Having reached his 20th birthday by this time, Colin Wilkinson became a Sub-Lieutenant and *Narbrough* continued with Atlantic convoy and patrol duties until May 1945. Colin received a Commendation in a Special Order of the Day and was also mentioned in despatches though he modestly asserts this was 'merely because I was the youngest officer and it was meant as a testimonial to the efforts of all the ship's company. Nothing I did was more praiseworthy than others' efforts'. Two further missions involved collecting a merchant ship interned in Bilbao, Spain where bananas and oranges were enjoyed; and the escorting of a tugboat pulling a surrendered U-boat to Libau in the Baltic. In early 1946 the crew returned their ship to America, sailing back to Britain on the liner *Queen Elizabeth*. After a posting to *HMS Opportune* and a period at Portsmouth Barracks dealing with disciplinary and court-martial cases, Lieutenant Colin Wilkinson received his discharge in October 1946. He returned to the Civil Service where he became an Executive Officer. As his wife hailed from Edinburgh he chose a posting there rather than London. He still lives in that city.

James Wilkie

Photograph taken by Toby Long at Photoexpress Edinburgh

Few of the plants James Wilkie tended as a teenager would have survived some of the conditions he was to experience during his naval service. Born on 13 January 1925 in Dundee, on leaving school James became a gardener in his native city before being called up in July 1943. Sent to *HMS Royal Arthur* in Skegness he underwent a medical examination, was issued with clothing and experienced drilling. He then moved to *HMS Scotia* in Ayrshire to begin a trainee telegraphist course of 14 weeks before moving to *HMS Valkyrie* to complete his qualification. James received a posting to *HMS Duckworth*, a Captain Class frigate built in Massachusetts transferred to Britain in August 1943 and assigned to the 3rd Escort Group. An Escort Group consisted of several small warships organised and trained to operate together to provide protection for trade convoys against submarine attacks. With *HMSS Domett*, *Blackwood*, *Cooke* and *Essington*, *Duckworth* sailed out of Belfast on U-boat search missions in the English Channel, the Bay of Biscay, the Eastern Atlantic, Land's End, the Channel Islands, Western France and Northern Spain.

James remembers the schedule being a voyage of three weeks followed by a day of refuelling. 'This we did four times (12 weeks) after which we returned to Belfast when half the ship's company got home leave, the other half shore leave'. Under their skipper Captain Mills, 'we sank seven U-Boats – two off Land's End, one off Lizard

Point, one in the Bay of Biscay, one off the Channel Islands, one off the Isle of Man and one in the Irish Sea'. As a telegraphist his role involved 'listening to messages coming through to the ship from Liverpool and places like that and also tracking indisputable echoes, bearing and distance of potential enemy U-boats to protect the merchant shipping. Sinking U-Boats proved difficult as they dive deep five miles out subsequently losing the echo'.

After a year James Wilkie discovered that he would soon be tracking U-boats in different waters. 'We got most of our information from the dancehalls. One girl said to me "do you know where you're off to next week?" I said no; she says "You're off to Russia." The next day there was an issue of warm clothing, which sealed the deal, and we set off for Loch Ewe a few days later.' Leaving Loch Ewe on 19 October 1944, *HMS Duckworth* formed part of the escort for Convoys JW61 and 61A and undertook a four-day mission to drop depth charges in the surrounding ocean to clear the way for returning Convoy RA61 which carried 6½ tons of gold bullion in boxes labelled 'furs'. Defending the convoys from U-boat attacks in the icy sea proved challenging. 'There was no ice at the time but it was freezing cold water. Whenever we got within four or five miles the U-boats dived deep and we lost echo altogether because the water was so cold'. The prospect of being torpedoed did not concern James. 'You never gave it a great deal of thought, it had been done before, it was another job; I never gave a thought of not coming back, it would have been silly to look at it like that'.

Convoy JW61 arrived safely at Kola with all its ships; JW61A comprising two liners carrying Russian POWs for repatriation also reached Murmansk without mishap and returning Convoy RA61 suffered no losses. October 1944, therefore, was the first month since September 1939 during which no merchant ships had been lost in the Atlantic and Arctic Seas. James Wilkie returned to Belfast in late November 1944 but in early 1945 he left the *Duckworth* to join *HMS Stevenstone* in St Catherine's Dock, London, having 'received the instructions myself on the transmitter'. In August *Stevenstone* took passage to the Mediterranean to join the 3rd Destroyer Flotilla and James served on this ship for a whole year before being discharged from the Royal Navy in July 1946. He returned to the plants and worked for nearly 50 years as a landscape gardener. He now lives in Invergowerie with his wife Christine who has been compiling a journal of his navy life which James says he enjoyed; although reflecting on his Arctic experiences he reckons 'we were lucky we came back'.

Thomas Lennie

Thomas Lennie was the only member of his family not to serve in the Black Watch – instead he joined the Royal Navy. Born in 1925 in Paisley he returned to his father's home town of Newburgh where he attended school. In 1939, aged 14, Thomas became an apprentice baker but soon drove the baker's van in spite of not having a driving licence. Joining the navy in 1942 he was sent to *HMS Raleigh* at Devonport for initial training and then underwent a further period of anti-submarine detection (ASD) training in Dunoon and Campbeltown. He had to travel to America, however, to embark on his ship, *HMS Redmill* being built for the US Navy but commissioned as a Royal Navy frigate under the lend-lease agreement on 20 November 1943. Thomas remembers that 'ladies' carried out the ship's welding and that the sea trials took place around Bermuda.

In 1944 *Redmill* served with *HMSS Byron*, *Conn*, *Deane*, *Fitzroy* and *Rupert* as the 21st Escort Group for the Atlantic convoys but the vessels spent the first half of the year escorting east coast and English Channel convoys and they provided support for the D-Day landings. In October 1944 Belfast became their base and Murmansk the

destination. The group sailed from Bangor Bay on the 14 October to form part of the ocean escort for outgoing Convoy JW61 and returning Convoy RA61. 'It was a very cruel journey on that boat. Every minute you did not know what was going to happen. There were planes trying to get you from the sky and submarines underneath'. Thomas Lennie's job involved the detection of the presence of submarines and he sat wearing his earphones 'four hours on, four hours off'. With the weather 'very very cold, windy, stormy and with high seas' he 'hardly managed to take a meal before being seasick'. The men were not allowed to undress or shave for fear of icing up. 'It was a terrible experience. We had to walk round with ropes tied round our waists in case we fell overboard. It was the only way to pull you out'. On reaching Kola Inlet Thomas and his colleagues went ashore on a whaler for a brief walk and they saw the torpedoed wreck of a Russian ship occupied by refugee children all bearing guns. On the return journey from Kola, on 6 November the captain of the *Byron* developed chronic appendicitis. A whaler was sent to *Redmill* for the group's doctor but during the manoeuvre the whaler capsized. The crew managed to scramble back on the ship but the doctor by the time he was rescued was unconscious. Miraculously he recovered and *Byron* proceeded independently to Belfast where the Commanding Officer was discharged to hospital.

Following the successful arrivals of both convoys *Redmill* and 21st Escort returned to Atlantic convoy duty and to patrolling the entrance to the English Channel. A break in the routine came for Thomas when *Redmill* had to escort a large Floating Dock bound for India but the ship only went with it as far as Gibraltar, before rejoining the group on the 9 February 1945. In March and April 1945, in action round the north of Scotland and in an area south of Ireland, the ships sank two U-boats. On 27 April, however, off Sligo Bay, U1105 fired two acoustic torpedoes at *HMS Redmill* removing about 60 feet from the stern and causing the loss of 24 lives and many injuries. Towed to Lisahally the hulk was eventually returned to the US Navy and sold for scrap.

Thomas Lennie had transferred to *HMS Erne*, a Black Swan-class sloop nominated after VE Day for service with the British Pacific Fleet, so in July 1945 Thomas found himself in Mediterranean waters – 'much warmer than the Arctic and you could get ashore and walk about'. He arrived at Colombo in August before sailing to Japan where *Erne* was 'the first ship into Nagasaki after the bomb fell'. The vessel remained in the Far East until the end of 1945, returning to Plymouth in February 1946. While serving on *Redmill* Thomas had been wounded and at this point he had to be admitted to hospital from where he received his naval discharge. He returned to Newburgh and found employment first in the dye works of Pullars of Perth, next as a chauffeur to the managing director of Tayside Floor Covering and finally as a charge hand in the oilskin factory Watsons of Newburgh. He still lives in Newburgh.

Kenneth Reith

At the age of 15 Kenneth Reith had no idea that he would spend his next 40 years in the Royal Navy. Born on 12 March 1927 in Black Rock Essex, he moved to Aberdeen when a baby. In order to assist with the family income he left school in 1941 for employment first as a 'rivet catcher' in a small Aberdeen shipyard and then as an apprentice sewing machine mechanic – one of four men among a feisty female workforce. Weeks before his 16th birthday Kenneth volunteered for the Royal Navy as a means of escape; his experiences as a sea cadet having given him a taste for the 'glamour' of the uniform.

He spent a year in training at *HMS St George* on the Isle of Man (Cunningham's Holiday Camp) learning about communications – how to be 'a flag waver' – and as a Signal Boy, joined *HMS Hilary*, 'a banana boat' which had been converted into a Communications HQ ship which participated in the D-Day landings. In December 1944 Ordinary Signalman Kenneth Reith was assigned to a 'real ship', *HMS Diadem*, a newly commissioned Dido-Class cruiser serving with the 10th Cruiser Squadron Home Fleet at Scapa Flow. Having spent 24 hours travelling from Portsmouth to Thurso on the troop train nicknamed 'the Jellico Express', Kenneth recalls that as the snow fell he was issued with a kitbag, hammock, green suitcase, wooden ditty box and tropical gear – 'to confuse the enemy? – as we thought we were going to a warm climate, not the North of Scotland in midwinter'. Within a few days he departed for

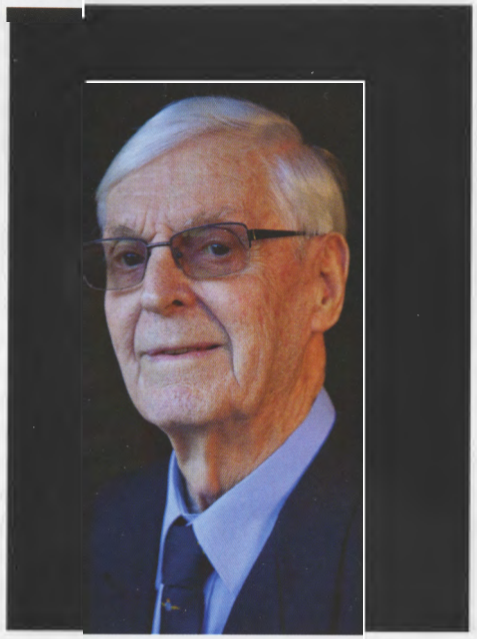
Loch Ewe to escort Convoy JW63 bound for the Arctic. The 38 merchant ships arrived at Kola on 8 January 1945 and on 11 January Convoy RA63 sailed on the homeward journey made hazardous by extreme weather which forced the reforming of the scattered and battered ships in the Faeroes. *Diadem* suffered damage to the hawse-pipes and the loss of her life boats.

Kenneth remembers temperatures as cold as minus 40 degrees – 'your eyebrows froze' – and waves the height of a high-rise building. 'The weather was our worst enemy'. With the guns icing up 'we had to use steam jets to ensure that they could fire'. An added hazard of being speared by icicles melting from the rigging came on return to warmer temperatures. Conditions on board were 'basic' and when at sea no one slept in hammocks because if the vessel sank the bedding might have blocked the outlets. 'Pretty monotonous' food sustained the crew – tinned herrings in tomato sauce, corned beef and boiled potatoes – using boiling fat for cooking would have been dangerous in rough weather. A young Sub Lieutenant complained about the lack of variety to the cook who grabbed a butcher's knife and chased the officer along the upper deck slipping and slithering on the ice. 'We had to use a Robertson stretcher as a straight-jacket to subdue him (the cook) and then sedate him'. As a signal rating Kenneth served on the bridge, open to the elements – 'four hours on and four hours off' – carrying out manoeuvres by flags and morse light. 'At action stations everyone aboard stayed at their place of duty as long as the action took place which could be many hours'. He often returned below 'soaked to the skin' and slept on the boards in his clothing but he preferred the 22 hours of darkness in winter as this gave cover from the enemy unlike the 22 hours of summer daylight.

Following the return of Convoy RA63, *Diadem* and *HMS Mauritius* engaged in action against the attempt of German destroyers to enter the Baltic Sea from Bergen. While successfully preventing this, *Diadem* sustained damage to the fore funnel from a shell which resulted in one death and three injuries. Not until later did Kenneth realise that he had a hearing impairment caused by the noise of the explosion. After two weeks of repairs, in March 1945 *Diadem* accompanied Convoy JW65 which came under U-boat attack with the loss of two American Liberty ships *Thomas Donaldson* and *Horace Bushnell* and *HMS Lapwing*. Nine U-boats lay in wait off the entrance to Kola for returning Convoy RA65 'but we managed to evade them by the subterfuge of sending four destroyers by the normal expected route firing pyrotechnics to simulate a convoy while we got away through a channel in the minefield which the Russian minesweepers had cleared for us'. This last convoy in which Kenneth sailed arrived safely in the Clyde on 1 April.

Notwithstanding the hazardous conditions he had endured Kenneth Reith decided to continue with his naval career at the end of the war and during the next decades he served on 22 ships varying in size from a minesweeper to an aircraft carrier, in two Naval Air Stations and in a number of shore establishments. When he left the Royal Navy in 1982 just before the Falklands War, he had risen to the rank of Lieutenant Commander – '14 years on the lower deck, 24 in the wardroom' – and was presented with an MBE from her Majesty the Queen. He next worked in the off-shore industry in Aberdeen as a Personnel Officer and then as a Naval Resettlement Officer before retiring at the age of 65 years. Recently married for the third time, he lives in Fife.

Eric Wallace Lloyd



Eric Lloyd was born in Liverpool in 1923, the youngest of four children. He and his brother Jack were later to fly in the same aeroplane in the Fleet Air Arm, Eric as pilot and Jack as his Observer (navigator). After the family moved to London, Eric won a scholarship to Bancroft's School in Essex, which had been founded by the Drapers' Company in 1737. On leaving there in 1940, he was employed in the engineering department of the London Metropolitan Water Board before volunteering for naval service on 29 December 1941. In the following month Eric began training as a pilot with the Fleet Air Arm at *HMS St Vincent,* Gosport until November 1942, followed by two months in North Wales; then in January 1943 he travelled on the *Queen Elizabeth* to Kingston, Ontario for advanced training. Having gained his pilot's wings he returned to Crail to fly Swordfish and Albacore planes but as at that time no squadrons required pilots Eric was sent to Worthy Down to train telegraphist air gunners (TAGs) – 'the most monotonous job in the world flying them round and round'.

When Eric had completed a conversion course to Avenger Planes in Lancashire, his brother Jack, who had also finished his training, joined Eric as his Observer. He thinks his mother was quite happy about this as she reckoned they would look after each other. From June 1944 the two brothers flew together with Squadron 846 based in Ireland and charged with patrolling the western approaches. Transferred to *HMS*

Trumpeter they 'spent a lot of time in the Arctic, mine-laying round Norway' as well as being involved in operations against the *Tirpitz* battleship and local coastal shipping. One experience Eric Brown will never forget concerns a gale which lashed the *Trumpeter* in early February 1945. Overnight the wind blew away 'my Avenger' which had been secured with double the usual number of steel lashings and clips at the end of the flight deck. 'After that night there were few cups or plates left in the ward room'. Then followed the stressful challenge of turning the vessel round for the return journey without capsizing – 'and by the time we got back to Scapa Flow there was no food left either'.

The *Trumpeter* formed part of the distant escort for Convoy JW65 in March 1945. Eric describes the operation as 'a fairly calm trip' although the 'eight U-boats lined up in Kola Inlet sunk the *Lapwing* and the American ship *Thomas Donaldson*'. The weather was 'awful', dense snow showers and squalls, with day patrols flying from *Trumpeter* and night flying from *HMS Campania*. Constant icing made flying conditions very difficult but 'the main problem was the sea – we were more frightened of the sea than the U-boats'. 'The person on board whom we totally relied on for our lives was the "batsman" (deck landing control officer) guiding us in to land on the deck of a ship that was constantly pitching, at the optimum moment'. The ship's captain had now realised that Eric and Jack were brothers and refused to allow them to continue to fly together on operations as he did not relish the thought of writing a letter of condolence to their parents in the event of a fatal accident. Ironically Jack's first operation flying with another pilot was almost a disaster. After take-off the aircraft, unable to reach flying speed, ended in the sea. Fortunately *HMS Opportune* rescued the three man crew within two minutes and the new type of waterproofed flying suits recently issued to them probably saved their lives.

Following the arrival of Convoy JW65 at Murmansk the frigate *Honeysuckle* tied up alongside *Trumpeter* and an officer came aboard to seek medical assistance for a crew member with a broken leg. Eric, happening to be the first person to greet him, hastily summoned *Trumpeter's* doctor and then enjoyed a brief chat with this other officer as they had both attended Bancroft's School. *Trumpeter* assisted with escort duties for returning Convoy RA65 which left on 23 March and successfully reached Kirkwall on 31 March. Despite all the hardships the entire crew was well-fed; bread being baked on the ship and the officers having the benefit of a Chinese laundry. Notwithstanding the approaching end of hostilities in Europe, anti-U-boat and mining operations continued in April and May 1945 – 'we didn't know what was happening in the war half the time'. Eric Lloyd's squadron returned to Machrihanish in June 1945 to prepare for service in the Far East but with the ending of the war this operation was abandoned. Eric eventually received his discharge on 3 June 1946. He then worked with the de Havilland Aircraft Company in Wales before graduating with a Master's Degree in Technology from Brunel University. He lectured at all levels in engineering at Harlow College Essex before retiring as College Vice-Principal. His wife Christine is from Scotland and in 1987 they became residents of Edinburgh where they still live.

John Stoddart Menzies

Musselburgh lad John Menzies really wanted to fly. Born on 3 April 1925 he left Musselburgh Grammar School in 1939 at the age of 14 to become a junior clerk in the Roads Department of Midlothian County Council. In February 1943, 'desperate to be away', he travelled to the Assembly Rooms in George Street Edinburgh to enlist but to his disappointment no pilot recruits were being taken for the Royal Air Force. Instead he became a Telegraphist/Air gunner (TAG) in the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. A TAG provided communications by Morse code and manned the rear gun of the aircraft. Posted to Butlin's Holiday Camp at Skegness, then operating as *HMS Royal Arthur* – 'it was no holiday camp' – John took part in the regulation 'square bashing' before being sent to *HMS St Vincent*, the shore establishment at Gosport, Hampshire. There he learned radio theory in a difficult course which encompassed mastering Morse code and being able to pass perfectly the daily test of 22 words a minute before the buzzer sounded. Failure meant returning in the evening to try again – 'backward buzzer' – which John never had to endure. Having achieved excellent marks he embarked (with 4000 troops including an African Corps and German prisoners-of-war) on the *Queen Mary* bound for New York and then to Nova Scotia.

In the Royal Navy's Naval Air Gunnery School (NAGS) at Yarmouth John learned gunnery technique and how to communicate from an aircraft and the 'wings' (flying badge) he received in 1944 are still a treasured possession. Further periods in

Monktown, New Brunswick and Halifax, Nova Scotia followed before John returned to Britain to the naval establishments of *HMSS Seaborn*, *Daedalus*, and *Bedhampton* in Hampshire. Sent to the operational training squadron *HMS Valkyrie* on the Isle of Man on 18 November 1944 he encountered Fairey Barracuda torpedo bombers and undertook dive bomber training over the Irish Sea. Perhaps he had a foretaste of what was to come for, after a flight to Machrihanish, snow fell for five days and the crew had to apply anti-freeze to the plane's wings to enable take-off. At the end of January 1945 John was posted to *HMS Shrike* in Northern Ireland where he remained until April with 836 Squadron.

Meanwhile post refit trials had been completed in the Clyde by *HMS Vindex* which 836 Squadron rejoined in readiness for convoy support service to Russia. On 19 April John Menzies boarded the *Vindex* for service with the squadron which flew Fairey Swordfish Mark II torpedo bomber planes equipped with floats for use off warships carrying aircraft catapult mechanisms. The Swordfish pioneered the use of air to surface vessel radar and at this point in the war, played a valuable anti-submarine role. A plane's crew comprised the pilot, observer and telegraphist/air gunner in charge of a Lewis or Vickers machine gun with a fixed forward-firing Vickers machine gun in the engine cowling. Rudimentary radar lay under the fuselage resulting in the nickname 'pregnant Swordfish'. *HMS Vindex*, an escort carrier sailing with 12 Swordfish formed part of the escort for Convoys JW66 and RA66. Although he did not know it at the time John Menzies participated in the last Russian convoy operations of the war.

German attacks on Arctic convoys persisted to the bitter end but John describes the voyages as 'relatively uneventful' although the presence of submarines had been detected and a group of U-boats awaited the convoy's arrival at Kola. The weather was 'pretty cold' with gales and a fair bit of ice; the surroundings 'absolutely bleak'. 'You lived in a state of high excitement interspersed with boredom'. He did witness a ' ditching' when the rocket assisted take-off gear (RATOG) failed and a Swordfish aircraft crashed into the sea. Fortunately the crew speedily got into their dingy and were rescued by HM Canadian Destroyer *Haida* – 'you had no chance in that water'. On 25 April the *Vindex* undertook anti-submarine operations launching Swordfish to lay sonobuoys across the mine-swept Channel while the convoy entered the Kola Inlet; and on 29 April sailed from Kola with Convoy RA66. Fourteen U-boats lay in wait and in the ensuing encounter the frigate *Goodall* was sunk with heavy loss of lives. No further attacks occurred during the passage of the convoy and on 6 May *Vindex* returned to Scapa Flow and then to the Clyde where on VE Day 8 May 1945 at Tail o' the Bank John saw the surrender of a number of German submarines.

John Menzies next returned to *Daedalus* before being sent back to the Isle of Man in July and to 822 Squadron at *HMS Ringtail* at Burscough, Lancashire in August. He was 'released in Class A' – eligible for recall – on 26 June 1946 as his father had died and he felt he had to support his mother. John found returning to his former job with the Roads Department 'dreadfully tame'. Married in 1950 he lived in Pathhead before moving to his current home in Dalkeith in 1962. After 40 years of service, at the age of 59 John Menzies took early retirement from his position of running the administration of Lothian Region. Two years ago he experienced a flying lesson at Inverness – and loved it.

Katie Russell

The Arctic Convoys may perhaps seem an unusual topic for tapestry weaving, but for me it feels completely natural. Tapestry weaving is perfect for the subject of war as it is tactile and full of emotion. My reasons for exploring this aspect of the war came after researching my grandfather's Merchant Navy record. For a while my family thought that he had taken part in the convoys, but after much research it turned out that he had not. He had delivered oil to Iceland, no doubt for the ships heading out to the Arctic. During this part of my research I came across more veterans' accounts of their experiences of the convoys. I also realised that I knew very little about this aspect of the war so I spent a lot of time reading, interviewing veterans and watching footage online. This project has been different to other projects in that the weavings have come from listening to someone's account of a particular journey to or from Russia.

In my weaving I have always been drawn to the landscape and to water. Colours, patterns and so many visual elements all play a vital role in putting across a character and a mood of a weaving. Wool, cotton, linen and jute have all been used in the tapestry weavings. I have felt very honoured to have been able to speak to the veterans about their experiences and to explore events that happened out with my lifetime. This is a project that I am not going to forget and it has inspired me to develop ideas further.

Awards

SW Scotland Visual Artists & Craft Makers Award 2015
Weavers Bazaar Sponsorship 2014
SW Scotland Craft Makers Award 2012
Theo Moorman Trust for Weavers 2012
Arts Trust Scotland 2012

Exhibitions

Russian Arctic Convoys – Castle Douglas Art Gallery, Dumfries & Galloway	Nov/Dec 2014
Tapestry Samplers Exhibition – CatStrand, New Galloway, Dumfries & Galloway	6-30 June 2014
Russian Day Reception hosted by Russian Consulate, Merchants Hall, Edinburgh	12 June 2014
Intertwine – Galloway Textile Collective, The Nail Factory, Dalbeattie, D&G	June 2014
Jute Exhibition – Verdant Works Jute Museum, Dundee.	Oct 13 – Jan 14

Landscape Weaving CatStrand, New Galloway, Dumfries & Galloway	Nov 2013
A Sensitive Art, BTG Exhibition Quilt Museum & Gallery, York	Sept/Nov 2013
Spring Fling Dumfries & Galloway	May 2013
Tapestry Collection Threave Gardens, Dumfries & Galloway	April 2013
Textiles Inspired by Burns The Old School House, Dumfries	Jan/Feb 2013
Woven Delights BTG Exhibition – Stirling Castle	July 2012

Future Exhibitions

Arctic Convoys – Men and Ice, St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh.	August 2015
The Golden Fibre, BTG Exhibition Verdant Works Jute Museum, Dundee	25 July- 18 Oct 2015
Intertwine Exhibition at The Nail Factory, Dalbeattie, Dumfries & Galloway	5 – 30 June 2015
Intertwine Exhibition at The Mill, Gatehouse of Fleet, Dumfries & Galloway	Sept 2015
Coastline and Maps - The Nail Factory, Dalbeattie, Dumfries & Galloway	6-30 Nov 2015
Maritime Tapestry Weavings – All Hallows' by The Tower, London	12-16 October 2015

I have a jute and wool tapestry weaving that has gone into the collection of Dundee Heritage Trust. This will be displayed at the High Mill in the Verdant Works Jute Museum in Summer 2015.

Memberships

Intertwine – Galloway Textile Collective
British Tapestry Group
American Tapestry Alliance
Craft Scotland
Weavers, Spinners & Dyers Guild

Website

www.katierussellweave.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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