



The Arctic Convoy Club of New Zealand

Newsletter
December 2022

Dear shipmates, families and friends

Armistice Day commemorated in Wellington

Our pre-Christmas meeting took a different turn this year.

Fourteen of our Arctic Convoy Club members were invited, as guests of honour for dinner, by the President of the Officers' Mess at Trentham Military Camp on Armistice Day, 11 November 2022.

Approximately 80 Defence Force Officers and their partners attended. After introductions and a welcoming cocktail, a three-course dinner was served.

Speeches and toasts followed with the traditional passing of the port. Arctic Convoy Club member George Billing (ex HMS Nabob) was invited to read the Oath.

Our thanks go to Lt Jack Gradwell (our youngest club member!) for organising the event, and to Lt Colonel Al Mitchell. The evening was enjoyed and appreciated immensely by all our members.



Above: Derek Whitwam, President of The Arctic Convoy Club of New Zealand listens to Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell addressing the guests.

Below: Serving officers from all three branches of the New Zealand Defence Force chat over dinner.



We are extremely happy to advise that two of our members have reached the wonderful milestone of 100 years.

Arch Jelley (ex HMS Bermuda) was first to attain this in early August and Chris King (ex HMS Bluebell), our Immediate Past President, attained his "ton up" on 3 October 2022.

Heartiest congratulations to both of our long serving members.

Right:
Lieutenant
Jack Gradwell
addresses
guests at the
Armistice Day
dinner



Below: Rear Admiral David Ledson RNZN (Ret) and partner Barbara Devery enjoy the evening.



One of the most important convoys of WWII remembered during operations in the Barents Sea

During a patrol of the Arctic, Royal Navy sailors paid tribute to those lost during one of the most important convoys of the Second World War.

Plymouth-based frigate HMS Northumberland joined tanker RFA Tiderace and Norwegian frigate HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl in the Barents Sea (pictured below).

It is a high north patrol which the Royal Navy carries out fairly regularly, with HMS Lancaster and HMS Kent ranging similarly far north in recent times.

Northumberland is no stranger to Arctic waters, either, having taken part in the region's largest military exercises for some 30 years, known as Cold Response 22, in March.



During a brief pause in operations, the task group held a memorial service to mark the 80th anniversary of the PQ18 Arctic Convoy – a perilous voyage made in September 1942 from Loch Ewe in Scotland to Archangel in the northern Soviet Union.

One in three of the 40 ships were lost as the convoy came under intense attack by the Nazis from above and below the waves as they attempted to deliver vital supplies for the Soviet war effort on the Eastern Front.

The commemoration took place on Northumberland's flight deck and was led by Commanding Officer, Commander Will Edwards-Bannon, and HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl's chaplain.

Cmdr Edwards-Bannon, said: "Although a first for many of my team, operations in the Barents Sea are nothing new for the Royal Navy.

"HMS Northumberland is well-suited to operating her full suite of cutting-edge capabilities in this environment and follows in a long tradition of Royal Navy warships doing so – a legacy underscored by this mission falling over the 80th anniversary of the heroically successful Arctic Convoy PQ18."

While in the region, the task group carried out 45 hours of flying operations above the Arctic Circle with Northumberland's Merlin helicopter.

"Conditions in the Arctic are certainly a challenge. The environment – especially the temperature – the Polar Code and the proximity to Russia are all factors that we take into account when planning and executing operations in the Southern Barents Sea," said Lieutenant Commander Kyle Walkley, HMS Northumberland's Principal Warfare Officer.

"But as a task-group, we absolutely achieved what we set out to deliver and there is a real sense of achievement across the whole of our ship's company."

Source: Royal Navy



A young woman was standing outside her car weeping. A soldier walks up and asks what the problem is. It turns out she'd locked her keys in the car.

"Simple," says the soldier and drops his trousers, takes them off, rolls them into a ball and rubs them on the door.

The door pops open. "How did you do that?!" exclaimed the young woman.

"Easy," says the soldier, "These are my khakis."

Up Spirits!



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