



Dear shipmates, families and friends

Arctic Convoy 75th Anniversary tartan commissioned



Designed by Brian Wilton, commissioned by the Russian Consul General in Edinburgh and registered with the Scottish Register of Tartans, the Russian Arctic Convoy tartan echoes the MacLeod and MacKenzie tartans from the clans bordering Loch Ewe, departure point for so many of the World War II convoys to Archangel and Murmansk, and encapsulates the essential colours remembered by convoy veterans.

Colours of dread, death and destruction but colours too of bravery, hope and survival are featured. White brings a multitude of memories: ice flows, wind-whipped wave-tops, snow and ice-encrusted superstructures and today the classic white berets of the surviving veterans. Grey is for the sea and the sky, for allied battleships and the ever-threatening German U-Boats. Black is for line upon line of German bombers and their devastating cargoes whilst silver is the most chilling sight of all, the bubbles in the wake of an oncoming torpedo.

Brightening the hopes of many thousands of those Arctic mariners however, was the red in the White Ensign of the escorting Royal Naval vessels; the red of the merchantmen's own flag, the Red Duster, and the red in the Russian national flag. The tartan cannot be offered for sale or woven without the express permission of the Russian Consul General in Edinburgh or his designated agents.

HMNZS Aotearoa

The Royal New Zealand Navy has announced that the name of its newest and biggest ship will be HMNZS Aotearoa. Construction of the 24,000-tonne vessel, the largest ship ever operated by the RNZN, will start next year for delivery in January 2020.

"HMNZS Aotearoa will represent us as a nation on the international stage whether conducting operational support, maritime sustainment or providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief. Aotearoa will be recognisable within the Pacific region and

identifiable with all New Zealanders" said RNZN's Rear Admiral John Martin.

HMNZS Aotearoa has twice the displacement of HMNZS Endeavour which is scheduled for decommissioning next year and will carry 30 per cent more fuel. South Korean firm Hyundai Heavy Industries, the world's biggest shipbuilder, will build Aotearoa.

"Aotearoa will have the ability to deploy anywhere in the world to support maritime operations and enhance our combat force," he said. "It has the ability to conduct embarked helicopter operations and will be capable of carrying a significant tonnage of operational supplies."



HMNZS Aotearoa will be a world-first naval "Enviroship", with Hyundai using the Rolls-Royce Enviroship concept design under licence. The design incorporates a new wave-piercing hull, which reduces resistance and lowers fuel use, while its combined diesel electric and diesel propulsion plant has lower fuel emissions than older vessels.

New Plymouth, Endeavour's home port, would become the home port for Aotearoa, he said. "This continues the longstanding relationship the RNZN has had with the Taranaki region, and its link to the sea. It also recognises the connection between the area's oil and gas industry and the role of Aotearoa in providing fuel services."



Life membership

At our 23 March 2017 meeting it was proposed and unanimously agreed to offer Honorary Life Membership to Barbara Devery for outstanding service to the club over many years. Barbara accepted the offer saying she was "extremely honoured".

Arctic Convoy Museum moving to permanent premises

At Loch Ewe, local media has reported that local officials have given the Russian Arctic Convoy Project permission to relocate to a former butcher's shop in Aultbea on the shores of Loch Ewe.

The Museum's supporters are expecting to undertake the move from the current site at Inverasdale School ready for an opening during the Loch Ewe WWII Festival on 7 May 2017.

Over 3,000 UK sailors perished during the Arctic Convoys which were described by Winston Churchill as the "worst journey in the world". The large military presence around the remote Highland region outnumbered the locals some three to one. The landscape remembers, with wartime bunkers and gun emplacements scattered around the loch to this day.

"The reuse of this vacant building is welcomed. The establishment of an exhibition space dedicated to the Arctic Convoys is considered to accord with the aims and objectives of the development plan particularly in relation to tourism facilities" a representative of the Highland Council is reported as saying.

The Loch Ewe World War II Festival takes place on 6 and 7 May 2017 to mark the 75th anniversary of the first convoys departing Loch Ewe.

Together with the Wellington branch of the Merchant Navy Association we have decided to donate NZ\$100.00 each to support the Russian Arctic Convoy Museum at Loch Ewe.

Subscriptions

Thank you to all those members who paid their 2017 subs promptly and to those who made a generous donation. Early payment makes it so much easier for our Treasurer.

Club meetings and events

Please mark your diaries for the following club meeting dates:

9 May 2017 at 11.00am Wreath laying at Wellington waterfront
24 August 2017 at 11:00am at Lower Hutt Memorial RSA
23 November 2017 with time and venue to be advised

Royal New Zealand Navy supports sub-Antarctic resupply



Offshore patrol vessel HMNZS Otago has transported more than seven tonnes of timber and equipment to remote Campbell Island / Motu Ihupuku (above), sub-Antarctic home of six species of albatross and the world's rarest duck.

Commodore Jim Gilmour, the RNZN's Maritime Component Commander, said Otago supported Department of Conservation

and MetService workers as they carried out resupply and maintenance tasks from 3-20 February 2017.



Lt Cdr Andrew Sorensen, the Commanding Officer of Otago, said the ship transported 16 DoC staff, including biosecurity rangers, five from MetService and two from DTA. DoC Senior Ranger Jo Hiscock said agency staff inspected and repaired field huts, bridges, tracks and boardwalks as part of routine maintenance.

Campbell Island, which lies 700 kilometres south of New Zealand's South Island, is the most southerly of the five New Zealand sub-Antarctic groups, and is one of the cornerstones of New Zealand's sub-Antarctic World Heritage site. It is best known as the home of the albatross, with six species in residence, including the largest albatross: the southern royal.

Pic of the month



From the deep: This American-built WW2 Sherman tank was recently raised from the wreck of a cargo ship sunk by a German U-Boat in the Barents Sea in 1945. The tank was being carried aboard the USS Thomas Donaldson as part of convoy JW-65 when she was torpedoed by U968 near the shore of Kildin Island on 20 March 1945.

And remember ...

An elderly, but hardy dairyman from Taranaki once told a young female neighbour that if she wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle a pinch of gunpowder on her oatmeal each morning. She did this religiously and lived to the ripe old age of 103. She left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, five great-great-grandchildren and a 40 foot hole where the crematorium used to be!

Up Spirits!



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