



# SUBTERFUGE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE HMS RESOLUTION ASSOCIATION

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## Editor's Notes

Welcome onboard –

Lots of leg work being done behind the scenes for the next Reunion in 2012. We're not quite ready to make announcements as we felt it better to wait until we have 100% confirmation and then go ahead. Saves any confusion!

If you've ever wondered what the Association is really all about then go to the forum and have a look at Taff's latest welfare report. Interesting reading! While you're at it, also Paddy may have expanded on Reunion news.

Not often we go political but, regardless of party represented, the article opposite does go against the grain and it would be interesting to hear the full story behind it all. Enough said!

Quite a few articles have been submitted lately and they are included in this Issue. Hope you all enjoy the read . . . . .

STAY WELL!

[newshound@hmsresolution.org.uk](mailto:newshound@hmsresolution.org.uk)

### Book Review

Lady Chatterley's Lover, D.H.Lawrence. First published 1928. In recent weeks there have been claims on the internet that the book was actually based on a true story. I consulted with Paddy who replied that the book was a work of pure friction!

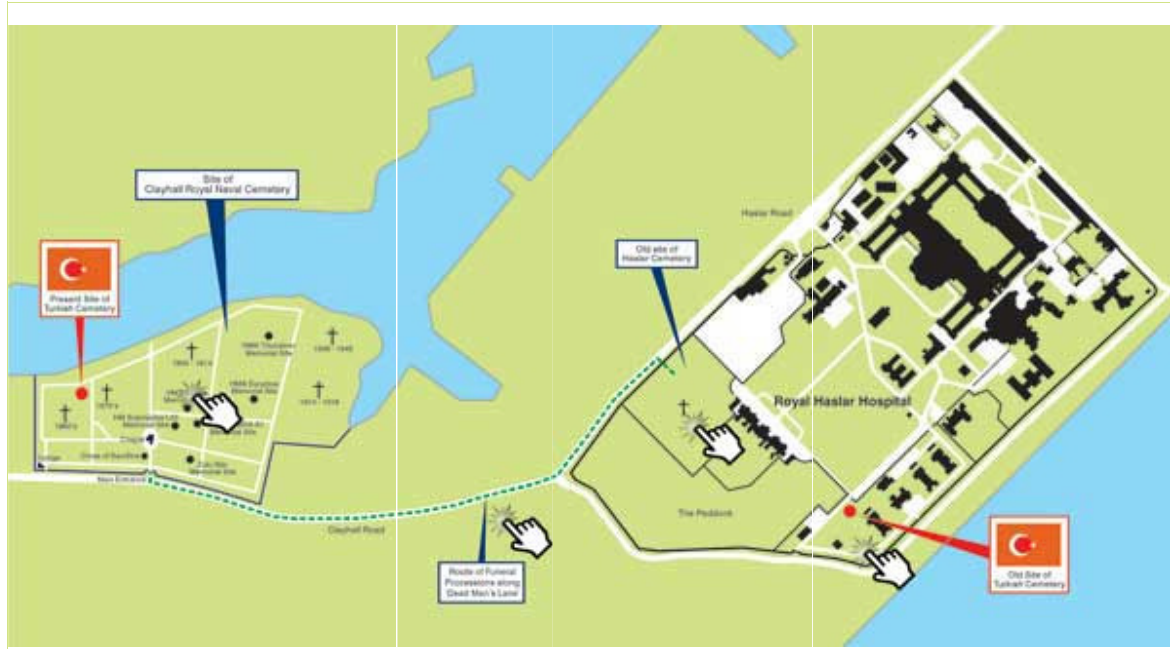
## MARK HIS CARD



War dead are to be driven out of the back gate and down side roads to avoid the public when repatriations are flown into RAF Brize-Norton. Andrew Robathan, Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, admitted that the decision to avoid public scenes of emotion had been taken deliberately. **Words fail me!**



## Clayhall Cemetery



### A brief history of Clayhall Royal Naval Cemetery

The Royal Hospital Haslar opened in October 1753 and from the date all those who died either at Haslar, or aboard ships in Portsmouth Harbour or at Spithead were interred in the grounds of the hospital.

In April 1859 the Haslar Cemetery closed and the Clayhall Cemetery was opened for the interment of Naval Personnel.

Here in these peaceful surroundings you will find the last resting place of over 1,500 British Sailors who died in the service of their country in two world wars and others who lost at sea in other conflicts and peacetime accidents.

One corner of this cemetery, a foreign field, is forever Turkish with graves of 26 Turkish Sailors.



Funeral processions left from Haslar for the cemetery but the band was not permitted to start the funeral march until entering Clayhall Road for fear of upsetting patients.

The road running the length of Haslar Hospital was called 'Dead Man's Lane' or mile because of the number of funeral processions which travelled from Haslar to Clayhall.





### HMS Archer Memorial

In Memory to the Officers, Seamen and Marines who died of Yellow Fever on the West Coast of Africa between 1864 and 1866.

### HMS Thunderer Memorial

On the 14th July 1876, a steam boiler explosion killed more than 40 officers and sailors including the CO on board HMS Thunderer at Stokes Bay.

### Zulu War Memorial

In memory of Sailors and Marines who were killed in action and died of diseases during the Zulu War of 1879



### HMS Eurydice Memorial

On return from the West Indies HMS Eurydice sank on the 24th March 1878 in a freak blizzard, off Ventnor, Isle of Wight. With the sails still set and gunports open the ship sank in minutes with only two survivors from a crew of 364.

The loss of the Eurydice caused the Navy to abandon sail training and the day of the Man of War was over.

HMS Eurydice is reputed to still sail as a ghost ship, with regular sightings in the area in which she sank and in the 1930's caused a Gosport Based submarine to take evasive action in order to avoid striking a full-rigged ship, which promptly disappeared.



### Did you know?

Naval Officers on full pay have the right to seize certain ensigns if flown by unauthorised persons when afloat. The ensign so seized is forfeit to His Majesty and the delinquent is also liable to a heavy fine.

## First World War 1914-1918



## Second World War 1939-1945



## Individuals



## HM Submarine A1 Memorial

### Sank off Isle of Wight after collision with SS Berwick Castle

On Friday March 18th 1904, whilst on exercise off the Isle of Wight HMS A1 was tasked with 'attacking' HMS Juno. The mock attack began early in the afternoon: HMS Juno had been sighted heading towards Portsmouth Harbour. First to attack were the Holland Boats, after which came A1's turn. As A1 closed in for the kill she was struck on the starboard side, near the conning tower, by the steam ship Berwick Castle, on route from Southampton to Hamburg. Unaware of the Submarines in the area the master of the Berwick Castle reported that he believed he had been struck by a practice torpedo and continued his journey. It was not until A1 failed to return to harbour that the full scale of the disaster was known.



**Did you know?** At night five minutes after the watch on deck changes one soft stroke is given on the ship's bell as a sign for the new watch to muster. This is always called **Little One Bell**. A Little One Bell relief is a particularly unpopular person as he is so called owing to his habitual lateness in taking over the watch.

### HM Submarine L55 Memorial

In Memory to the 42 Officers and Sailors of HM Submarine L55 sunk in the Baltic Sea on 9th June 1919.

Whose bodies returned for burial in 1928 and lie in a collective grave.



### Graves of Turkish Sailors - 1850-1851

In November 1850, two ships of the Turkish Navy, the Mirat-ı Zafer and Sirag-i Bahrı anchored off the Hardway - Gosport. The visit lasted several months and during this time most of the members of the crew contracted Cholera and were admitted to Haslar Hospital for treatment, from those who were admitted most of them died and other sailors died because of training accidents. In total 26 died and were laid to rest in the grounds of Haslar.

At the turn of the 19th Century the bodies were exhumed and transferred to Clayhall Cemetery where they now lie in peace.

*"They set sail for eternity and met their creator, and here they are laid to eternal rest."*



## Excavation at Haslar reveals horror of life in Nelson's navy

Published on Friday 29 May 2009 10:51

An excavation of a former military hospital graveyard has revealed the harrowing deaths of some sailors from Nelson's navy. The dig is being carried out in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Haslar in Gosport, where the unmarked graves date back to 1755. The work, which is being filmed for a Channel 4 Time Team documentary, is to reveal what life was like in the navy hundreds of years ago. A total of 29 skeletons will have been carefully removed and analysed by Sunday, when the excavation comes to a close. Some of the incredible cases that have been revealed so far include a skeleton from a man in his mid-20s, which has seven broken bones, a broken jaw and one side of his skull smashed. Analysis from the team of 60 who have been working on the project shows he would have survived in hospital for about three months being fed through a straw before passing away from an infection. It is believed he would have fallen from the rigging or crows nest of a ship and smashed face first into the deck. They also found the skeleton of one man, also in his mid-20s, who had his leg amputated below the knee.

Dr Andrew Shortland, who runs the Centre for Archaeological and Forensic Analysis at Cranfield University, which is jointly behind the project with the MoD, said: 'The excavation is taking place so that we can gain more knowledge of how naval hospitals were at the time, in particular Haslar. 'We also want to know how people died, and we are really discovering what life was like in the navy at the end of the 18th century. 'It's hit home that there just wasn't any safety net for these people. 'Seeing how these people died, having it stare you in the face, is really quite sobering.' The dig has also shown that there are an estimated 8,000 bodies buried, many from Nelson's navy and battles such as Trafalgar and Waterloo. The analysis has been carried out through observation and measurement. Over the coming weeks chemical tests will be carried out to see what the diet in the navy was like. All skeletons will be given full military burials when the research is complete.

### AFTER THE DIG

After the excavation has come to a close and the results have been compiled, academic papers will be published on the findings. It is also hoped that a book on life in Nelson's navy and treatment at Haslar hospital will be published. During Gosport's Big Day Out on June 14, there will be guided tours of the site by and discussions of the excavation. These will be carried out by George Malcolmson, archivist at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, who has been helping with the project. For more information on these tours visit [rnsubmus.co.uk](http://rnsubmus.co.uk) or call (023) 9251 0354.

### Did you know?

The use of the **Boatswain's pipe** is almost lost in antiquity, but we know that the ancient galley staves of Greece and Rome kept stroke by the flute or whistle. The **Pipe** or **Call** was originally used as a badge of rank also and as such was worn by the Lord High Admiral and known as the Whistle of Honour and was made of gold and suspended from the neck by a gold chain. These officers also carried a **Whistle of Command**, which was of silver, and was used for passing orders and blown as a salute to certain personages. It was enjoined that it should be blown on these occasions "three several times."

### Did you know?

A **Dead Marine**, of course, is well known as an empty bottle that has done its duty and is ready to do it again; but some have been known to suggest that the term is derived from the fact that an empty bottle always floats head up, and it has been rumoured that a Marine will do this even when dead, owing to the traditional size of his feet. I think the former explanation is certainly the most just and decidedly the most apt. It is supposed that the Duke of Clarence made use of this term on one occasion and the event is commemorated in verse by Colonel W. Drury, R.M.

Dear Friends,

As details of the scandal surrounding my company, News Corporation, have emerged in recent weeks – including employees hacking into mobile phones and bribing the police – my defense has been consistent: I had no idea what was going on.

Now, I'm sure many of you are wondering, how could I, Rupert Murdoch, one of the most powerful men in the world, have no idea what is going on? The answer, my friends, is simple: I get all of my information from my own newspapers. If you relied on News of the World, The Sun, and The New York Post for your information, I can assure you that you wouldn't have a clue what was going on, either.

Some of you aren't buying this argument. You maintain that a media titan like me would get his information from sources beyond newspapers – like TV, for example. Well, that's true. But in my case, the only TV I watch is the Fox News Channel. So not only do I not know what is going on around me, I know nothing about the theory of evolution, global warming, or President Obama's birthplace.

If you still don't believe that I know nothing, here's a final piece of evidence: I paid \$500 million to acquire MySpace. Case closed.

Now that we've established that I know nothing, let me address some of the allegations about News Corp. that have come up in recent days: first and foremost, that our reporters have regularly bribed the police to obtain information. I am shocked and appalled by this charge. News Corporation has a longstanding zero tolerance policy regarding information, both the getting of it and the publishing of it. Going forward, we will be subjecting our employees to a series of random information tests. Any employees found to be possessing even trace amounts of facts will be immediately terminated.

Finally, it has come to my attention that several of my company's tabloids have featured pictures of women with their shirts off. I am as shocked by this news as you are and I intend to launch a full investigation.

In closing, I want to assure you that I intend to make amends for any and all of the wrongdoing perpetrated by employees of News Corp. in recent years. And to that end, I have plan: I implore the British government to let me own 100% of the satellite broadcasting giant B-Sky-B. I have made some grievous mistakes with the media properties I already control, and the only way I can think of to make things right is by controlling even more.

Your friend,

Rupert

A woman in her forties went to a plastic surgeon for a face-lift. The surgeon told her about a new procedure called "The Knob," where a small knob is placed on the back of a woman's head and can be turned to tighten up her skin to produce the effect of a brand new face lift. Of course, the woman wanted "The Knob." Over the course of the years, the woman tightened the knob, and the effects were wonderful-the woman remained young looking and vibrant. After fifteen years, the woman returned to the surgeon with two problems. "All these years, everything has been working just fine. I've had to turn the knob many times and I've always loved the results. But now I've developed two annoying problems: First, I have these terrible bags under my eyes and the knob won't get rid of them. "The doctor looked at her closely and said, "Those aren't bags, those are your breasts." She said, "No point asking about the beard then.....!"

## THE MURMANSK RUN

As long as men write about the dangers of the seas and the heroic deeds of those who take their ship into battle against long odds, they will tell tales of the "Murmansk Run" in World War II, when merchant ships steamed into the stormy Arctic with supplies for the Russian front. It was then that the new Libertys went into battle for the first time and, along with their older companions, faced a relentless enemy as they fought through to the Barents Sea and the White Sea to reach the distant Russian supply ports of Archangel and Murmansk.



This supply route was absolutely vital to the Russians if they were to hold out against the Nazi offensive. Without the Allied ships that made the voyage with products from the American war arsenal, the Russians may well not have beaten back the German invasion. The only other deepwater route to Russia terminated in the Persian Gulf ports, but the rail lines and roads that ran from the Gulf to the interior of Russia would, because of their length and their limited capacity, have been unable to carry the vast amount of munitions and food needed by the Russians. All other supply routes were under German control. Ships had to make the Murmansk run to keep Russia in the war.

A voyage to North Russia was never a routine affair, for there was always the hazards of storms and arctic ice, whether or not the ship faced enemy attack. From a day or two after leaving the points of departure--Loch Ewe in northern Scotland, or Reykjavik in Iceland--ships could expect submarine surveillance or attack while they steamed 1,600 miles from Scotland to Murmansk or 1,500 miles from Reykjavik to the same port. Convoys, and in a few cases unescorted merchantmen, sailed within easy striking distance of German air bases spaced strategically along the coast of Norway from Bodo, just above the Arctic Circle, to Banak, a short distance from North Cape. Added to the threat of planes and submarines was the constant possibility of a foray by German capital ships or destroyers based at Trondheim and various fjords along the coast. The battleships Tirpitz and Scharnhorst and the battlecruisers Admiral Scheer and Admiral Hipper were a force in being that, while never attaining its potential for destruction on the convoy routes, did serve effectively to tie down a powerful segment of the British Home Fleet through a good part of the war.

The Allies failed to realize that the principal purpose of this fleet was not to harass the Russian convoys, but to defend Norway against what Hitler believed was an inevitable Allied invasion. Admiral Sir John Tovey, Commander-in-Chief of the British Home Fleet, told the Admiralty that the Germans would do everything in their power to stop the Russian convoys. This prediction certainly proved true. Although the German capital ships spent most of their time hiding in Norwegian fjords, waiting an expected invasion, submarines and aircraft pressed their attacks against the convoys until the end of the war. German destroyers were able adversaries, too, accounting for a number of merchantmen and convoy escorts when they accompanied the larger combat craft on convoy-hunting expeditions.

These were by no means the only threats to ships making the Murmansk run. During the short northern summer, 24 hours of daylight made it possible for German aircraft to attack continuously from the time ships came within striking

range. Throughout the rest of the year, the merchantmen and their hard-worked escorts, especially the destroyers and smaller craft, had the world's worst weather to contend with: spray that froze on topside surfaces, blinding snow, driving sleet, and violent storms that tossed ships about and hopelessly scattered convoys. Careful and well-planned convoy protection was often disrupted by storms. From 24 to 27 March 1942, convoy PQ13 was scattered over 150 miles of ocean by a storm. Pack ice made matters even worse. In those four days of trouble off North Cape, five merchant ships were sunk by submarines and aircraft, and the British cruiser Trinidad was damaged in a battle with German destroyers.



In the winter and spring of 1942, President Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins, as well as Premier Josef Stalin, continually pressed the English to step up the number and the size of convoys to Russia, despite protestations by Winston Churchill and the Admiralty that their naval forces, especially in the matter of destroyers, were stretched to the limit. Stalin sent an urgent message to Churchill in May of 1942 in which he said, "I am fully aware of the difficulties involved and of the sacrifices made by Great Britain in the matter (the Russian convoys). I feel, however, incumbent upon me to approach you with the request to take all possible measures in order to ensure the arrival of the above-mentioned materials in the USSR in the course of May as this is extremely important for our front." The situation reached a climax that month. Dozens of Russian-bound ships were waiting in Iceland, and Churchill approved a much-debated plan to sail a convoy--pQ16, of 34 ships--in the latter part of that month. "The operation is justified," he said, "if half getshrough."

There was Stalin's own assessment of the importance of these convoys to Russia's ability to hold back the German invader. It is no exaggeration, in the light of history, to say that the convoys kept the Russians in the war. The Russian front was no less important to the winning of the war than the Normandy landings or the invasion of Okinawa. The understandable British reluctance to accept the heavy losses to merchantmen and escorts on this run, and the continued Russian and American insistence that the convoys should move regardless of losses, was a matter of contention that created bitter feelings and suspicions despite the polite wording of official communiques. The British viewpoint was expressed by Captain S. W. Roskill, R.N., who wrote in *War at Sea* that "the Russians never relieved the Home Fleet of any appreciable share of responsibility for defending the Arctic convoys." Neither, for that matter, did the United States, where ardent protestations of the need to sail the ships was not accompanied by any offer of escort craft to help see them through. Indeed, the U. S. Navy was so woefully short of escorts and trained personnel that it couldn't even protect Allied ships along the Atlantic seaboard.

Forty convoys, with a total of more than 800 ships, including 350 under the U. S. flag, started on the Murmansk run from 1941 through 1945. Ninety-seven of those ships were sunk by bombs, torpedoes, mines, and the fury of the elements. Were the Murmansk convoys instrumental in keeping Russia in the war? They carried more than 22,000 aircraft, 375,000 trucks, 8,700 tractors, 51,500 jeeps, 1,900 locomotives, 343,700 tons of explosives, a million miles of field - telephone cable, plus millions of shoes, rifles, machine guns, auto tires, radio sets, and other equipment. The first convoy to Russia--six English ships and one Russian--sailed from Scotland in August of 1941 and delivered 15,000 tons of cargo without incident. The first Liberty ships to make the Russian run were the R. H. Lee, Zebulon Vance, John Randolph, and Francis Scott Key, which set out for Murmansk in the early convoys of 1942.



"From Philadelphia to Murmansk," the deck log of the Francis Scott Key began, when the voyage commenced in Philadelphia on 29 January 1942. But many months passed before the ship reached her destination. By March the Key was in Halifax, Nova Scotia, ready to join a ten-knot convoy across the submarine-infested North Atlantic. March 3, 1942, 11:00 a.m.--Stand by engines 12:00 noon. Anchor aweigh. Standing out the river. 1:00 p.m., half ahead, pilot away. Overcast and raining. Vessel pitching moderately. Shipping heavy spray over all. They were routine comments from a ship's log, but for vessels outward bound on the Russian run they signalled a departure from safe haven into a hazardous and stormy unknown; and for many a ship and crew, a voyage of no return. For anyone who has sailed in a freighter on the wintry North Atlantic, these entries in the log will recall the sight of angry, mountainous spray-topped seas and the sound of wind howling and screeching through the stays. March 4. Vessel rolling heavily. Overcast and heavy fog. March 7. Sighted convoy and rejoined. Easterly gale. March 9. Overcast. Fog banks. Vessel rolling heavily. Heavy N. E. swells. March 12. Ship pitching and rolling and shipping water over the deck. The Francis Scott Key was some 13 days reaching Greenock, Scotland, a distance of 2,712 miles at a little better than 8 knots. There she joined a convoy to Iceland, but collided with a destroyer en route and missed the Murmansk convoy she had originally been scheduled to join. She sailed from Reykjavik on 26 April in convoy PQ15 of 23 ships, which encountered intermittent air and submarine attack during thenine-day run to Murmansk. The convoy lost only one freighter, blown up and sunk by an aerial torpedo. Five gangs of 40 men worked night and day, unloading the ship in seven days. There were numerous German air raids at Murmansk but no ships were damaged and the Francis Scott Key left on 21 May. She reached Iceland on 29 May after a 1,615 mile run. The ship was back in New York on 31 July, still lucky. But only two weeks out of New York the Seattle Spirit, an old World War I Liberty-fleet ship sailing with her, was torpedoed and sunk.

Long voyages and the constant danger of being sunk, especially in winter weather, were hard on crews both physically and mentally. By the time the Francis Scott Key arrived in New York, tempers were raw. There were numerous fights among the men and one of the Armed Guard detachment threatened to "blow the first mate's

brains out" for inadvertently showing a light while taking a nighttime bearing on the bridge. The John Randolph and Richard Henry Lee were the only Liberty ships in convoy PQ16. On 24 May, the Lee reported floating mines while the convoy was steaming through patches of thick fog. The mine warning instantly put everyone on the alert and made it especially tough for the black gang going on watch below. As soon as the fog lifted, German bombers hit the convoy. On the morning and forenoon watches of 25 May, about a dozen bombers and torpedo-bombers attacked. One plane was shot down by the Lee's Navy gun crew. Like most ships making the run at that time, the Richard Henry Lee was armed only with light machine guns. That evening the log recorded: "Air battle on again. All driven away. This is no child's play. Battling is furious. Fog banks save the day. Convoy fighting ice, mines, bombs, torpedoes and submarines." Next day a sub attack was followed by an air raid in which one ship was sunk. "More blessed snow equals," read the 1600 log entry. On 27 May, a stick of bombs landed within 20 feet of the Richard Henry Lee with no visible damage. The machine gunners ran out of ammunition and had to broach the cargo for more. "During the attack," the log noted, "our ship's carpenter died. J. Thompson—a fine man. The raid was so heavy we only had time to cover him up with some blankets." At 1100 on 28 May a funeral service was conducted. Before the Scripture reading was over, bombers roared in again and the crew had to run for the guns. And at 2000 that night: "Here they come again. Four bombs landed about 20 feet off the starboard side. Bomb fragments all over the deck." Next day: "Rain and fog. This is the kind of weather we like."

Courage and determination were bywords in the Murmansk run. "I had little hope for her survival," said Commodore Onslow, senior officer of the escort for convoy PQ16 after his ship, the Ocean Voice, had been hit and set afire during mass air attacks. "But this gallant ship maintained her station, fought the fire and, with God's help, arrived at her destination. We were all inspired," he added, "by the parade-ground rigidity of the convoy's station keeping, including the Ocean Voice and the Stari Bolshevik (Russian), who were billowing smoke from their foreholds." A few convoys delivered their cargoes without incident, but for most of them the Murmansk run meant either going down in battle or fighting through with guns, seamanship, and devotion to duty. Almost every ship that traveled this route gave her crew plenty of thrills to remember. The first-trip Libertys shared adventures with ships that were old before the ugly ducklings were hatched. All of them had one common fault: they were too slow to outrun submarines. Ships of the early convoys were usually too lightly armed to put up much fight against air attack, but they fought valiantly with what they had. The Michigan in PQ16 shot down two planes with her meager armament. Gunners on the expositor blew the conning tower off a submarine. The Steel Worker struck a mine in Kola Strait. The ammunition-laden Syros was torpedoed and disintegrated in one terrifying blast. The Bateau was sunk in a running fight with German destroyers. During convoy operations, merchant ships and escorts shot down many enemy planes, but there was no way of establishing a final score. Escorts sank the German submarines U88, U589, and U457.

Of all the convoys that made the Murmansk run, PQ17 has become the most famous--and with good reason. It consisted of 33 merchant ships when it left Reykjavik, Iceland, on 28 June 1942, headed for the Denmark Strait, Archangel, and Murmansk. Of the 21 U. S. ships, six were new Libertys: Christopher Newport, William Hooper, John Witherspoon, Daniel Morgan, Samuel Chase and Benjamin Harrison, all fresh from the yards. The others were American ships under the Panamanian flag, plus British, Russian, and Dutch ships. At that time Russia was reeling before the German blitzkrieg, so PQ17 was loaded with strategic materials urgently needed by the Soviets--armor plate, steel, flour, canned goods, nickel, oil stills, aluminum, cordite, TNT, aircraft parts, guns and planes. Every ship carried a cargo worth a rajah's ransom. For protection against attack by the German surface fleet, PQ17 had a heavy escort: the British cruisers London and Norfolk, and the U.S. cruisers Wichita and Tuscaloosa, a gesture of aid to the British and a token of camaraderie for the doubting Russians. The immediate convoy patrol included destroyers, corvettes, two anti-aircraft ships, several armed trawlers, three rescue ships for picking up the crews of sunken vessels, and two submarines. A covering force, battleships HMS Duke of York and USS Washington, the carrier HMS

Victorious, three cruisers and numerous destroyers, had been assigned to the general area over which the convoy was to travel, but they remained well beyond the 300-mile flight range of German aircraft. This formidable escort did not deter the enemy. At 0230 on 4 July, a Heinkel torpedo-bomber eluded a hail of fire from the corvette Palomaris and torpedoed the Christopher Newport. The explosion blasted a big hole in the engine room, and the men on watch drowned. The survivors abandoned ship. That evening, at suppertime, a flight of 24 twin-engine bombers attacked, winging in no more than 20 to 30 feet above the sea. Despite a curtain of fire, five planes managed to get in among the convoy to torpedo the British freighter Navarino, the American Liberty ship William Hooper, and the Russian tanker Azerbaijan. The Navarino and Hooper sank. Soon after that the convoy commodore hoisted an astonishing signal: "Scatter fanwise. Proceed to destination at utmost speed." Some of the captains could not believe the order and requested a repeat, but there had been no mistake. The escort had been ordered to abandon the merchant ships and their precious cargoes. Each vessel was to proceed independently and the devil take the hindmost.

Long afterward, the mystified skippers learned the reason for their abandonment. The British Admiralty believed that the German battleship Tirpitz and battlecruiser Scheer had left their Norwegian bases to intercept PQ17. Scattering the convoy was the best, but tragic, alternative to having the Germans pounce on all the ships in one compact group, a target which their big guns would have eliminated in short order. The cruisers were withdrawn to keep them from being part of the expected sacrifice. The USS Washington and HMS Duke of York, with the Victorious and the cruisers, were not brought forward for fear they might be sunk by planes or submarines, thus freeing the German fleet for raiding operations in the North Atlantic. Since the main hope of eliminating the German battleship threat was through a decisive surface action, such timidity in refusing to employ Duke of York, Washington, and Victorious has been questioned in the years since. But cold facts at the time dictated the necessity of hazarding merchant ships rather than battleships and cruisers. The scattered convoy, as it turned out, only became easier victims for planes and submarines, and by 7 July, 18 freighters and 100,000 tons of cargo had been sent to the bottom.

The Daniel Morgan and the American freighter Fairfield City were making for Nova Zembla when Junkers bombers attacked and sank the latter. During this attack, nine sticks of bombs fell around the Morgan. Despite the fact that her 3-inch gun crew had been at battle stations for more than 24 hours without rest, they splashed two of the attackers. But many near-misses ruptured a number of hull plates and the Morgan was taking water fast. The crew abandoned ship, after which a submarine torpedoed her and she went down. The U-boat surfaced and gave the crew a course to steer to the nearest land. They were soon picked up by the Russian tanker Donbass and helped man the guns on that ship, shooting down one more bomber before they reached the White Sea. As the remnants of PQ17 limped on, German attacks continued. On the afternoon of 5 July, the radio operator of the Samuel Chase logged these transmissions on the progress of the battle:

Unidentified ship: "Two subs attacking."

SS Washington: "Being dive bombed."

Unidentified ship: "Have just been torpedoed."

Unidentified ship: "Attacked by seven planes."

SS Daniel Morgan: "Under heavy attack."

SS Pan Kraft: "Under attack by aircraft."

On 10 July, while making a last-leg dash from Nova Zembla toward the White Sea, the Chase was attacked by six Junkers 88s. According to her log not all the fighting was done by the Germans: Received six near misses within 60 yards of the ship. Snapped steam lines to main engine and auxiliaries. Ship lay dead in water. Compass knocked from the binnacle. Taken in tow by corvette at 1534 hours. Planes over again. Dive bombers driven away by ack-ack. Two shot down. Of PQ17's original 33 ships, only 11 finally delivered their cargoes. Of the six Libertys, only Samuel Chase and Benjamin Harrison reached Murmansk. As Churchill so aptly put it, PQ17 was "one of the most melancholy episodes in the whole of the war." Regrets over errors in judgment could not bring back the ships, the men, or the vast amount of cargo sent to the bottom with the unprotected ships of this unfortunate convoy, but the Admiralty vowed that no such disaster would befall the next convoy--PQ18--to make the Murmansk run. That fleet of 39 merchantmen left Loch Ewe, Scotland, on 2 September with one of the heaviest escorts ever assigned to any convoy of comparable size throughout the war. The convoy included Liberty ships Esek Hopkins, Nathaniel Greene, Oliver Ellsworth, Virginia Dare, William Moultrie, and Patrick Henry. In addition to merchant ships, there were two fleet oilers, a rescue ship, and an oiler and three minesweepers assigned for transfer to the Russians. For defense against submarines there were two destroyers, two submarines, four corvettes, three minesweepers, and four trawlers. Two anti-aircraft ships steamed along inside the convoy columns for defense against air attack. Further protection against air attack or a sortie by capital ships was provided by the aircraft carrier HMS Avenger, escorted by four destroyers. Fearing, and yet halfway hoping, that the Germans might hazard an attack on the convoy by a battleship or battle cruiser, the Admiralty had also given PQ18 an independent force of 16 destroyers accompanied by the cruiser Scylla, their prime mission being to attack and torpedo the Tirpitz, Scharnhorst, or Scheer. Further protection against a heavy ship attack was a cruiser covering force that included the Norfolk, Suffolk, and London. Also available, in case of emergency, were the cruisers Sheffield and Cumberland and one destroyer, which were accompanying a convoy on a supply mission to Spitzbergen. The battleships Anson and Duke of York, escorted by the cruiser Jamaica and five destroyers, were deployed to the westward, safely beyond German bomber range. As an added precaution, the Admiralty had ordered submarine patrols off the Lofoten Islands and the coast of Norway to spot any foray by the Tirpitz or her companions and, if possible, to torpedo them as they sortied. Such formidable protection did not discourage the enemy. The German submarine U589 torpedoed the Oliver Ellsworth on 13 September, and from then on the ships of PQ18 kept their men constantly at battle stations as they fought off day and night attacks by bombers and submarines.

Most ships on the Murmansk run carried TNT or ammunition, so their crews knew full well that a torpedo or bomb hit could send a ship and all aboard her to Kingdom Come in one terrible, all-consuming blast. So it was on 14 September. Every ship in the convoy was busy that day. One attack by 40 bombers sank eight ships. The American freighter Mary Luckenbach, carrying 1,000 tons of TNT, was hit by an aerial torpedo. Little was left of the vessel except a pillar of smoke when rescue craft arrived to look for survivors. According to the Esek Hopkins, the torpedo was dropped by a burning plane and the explosion of the Luckenbach destroyed that plane and another as well.

The blast effect shook the nearby American ship Scoharie as though she had been torpedoed, throwing men flat on the deck and hurling fragments of steel from bow to stern. On the Nathaniel Greene, the blast threw gunners from their stations, smashed crockery in the galley, broke doors, and showered the vessel with debris, including shell casings from the Luckenbach's guns. Captain George Vickers of the Nathaniel Greene had just swung his ship away from one of several aerial torpedoes when the Luckenbach blew up. He thought at first that his ship had been hit and ordered the crew to lifeboat stations. Captain Richard Hocken of the William Moultrie, steaming in the same column immediately astern of the Luckenbach, said that when his ship passed over the spot, "there was nothing left of her at all—not even a raft--no wreckage, not even a match box; hardly a ripple on the surface of the sea."

With more luck than some and thanks to her captain's leadership and a courageous crew, the Moultrie came through the voyage safely. Hocken received the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal and this citation: His ship, the S.S. William Moultrie, in a convoy which suffered heavy losses, fought through a week of continuous attacks by enemy bombers and submarines to deliver her cargo of war material to a North Russian port. In the course of the long, running battle, the ship was directly attacked 13 times and was credited with downing eight planes and with scoring hits on 12 others. During the first attack on the convoy, the William Moultrie distinguished herself by shooting down three torpedo planes and assisting in the destruction of six more. The following day her guns shot down four more of the attacking planes and damaged five. Later, after successfully repelling another attack by planes, four torpedoes were sighted heading for the ship. The guns fired on them, exploding one and the other three were eluded by skillful seamanship. Captain Hocken, master of a gallant ship and a gallant crew, exhibited qualities of leadership and high courage in keeping with the finest traditions of the U. S. Merchant Marine. The Virginia Dare was a new Liberty ship on her maiden voyage, yet her green crew was credited with shooting down or assisting in the destruction of seven bombers. The Nathaniel Greene shot down several planes that day. Her Armed Guard officer, Lieutenant (junior grade) R. M. Billings, described the action:

Upwards of 25 torpedo planes attacked the port flank of the convoy and some of them went for the aircraft carrier. At about 1355 a swarm of torpedo planes were sighted near the water in front of the convoy on the starboard side ... the planes circled and came in directly at us, and we opened fire with everything we had ... one plane crossing our bow received a direct hit from our three inch gun and crashed in the water. Two more planes were shot down by our machine gun fire as they went down the port side and another plane was shot down on the starboard side. The planes were so close you couldn't miss with a machine gun.

Convoy PQ18, after fighting nearly all the way, arrived at its destination on 21 September with 20 ships. Planes and U-boats had sunk 13. Eight American ships went down--the Liberty Oliver Ellsworth, and the Kentucky, Mary Luckenbach, Oregonian, Wacosta, John Penn, AJricander, and Macbeth, an American ship flying the Panamanian flag. The convoy paid a heavy price in ships and cargo, but it also exacted a heavy toll from the enemy that, along with urgent demands upon the Germans for more aircraft elsewhere, discouraged further mass air attacks against heavily protected Murmansk convoys.

Getting to Russia was only part of the job. Some ships spent so much time waiting to unload in the crowded ports that the crews began to feel like Soviet citizens. The crew of the Yaka, at Murmansk, sweated out 156 air raids while off-loading cargo. The Ironclad ran aground at Archangel and was given to the Russians. The Libertys Thomas Hartley, Francis Scott Key, and Israel Putnam spent nearly eight months unloading, and endured many air attacks. Hartley was credited with three kills. The John LaFarge and John Ireland also shot down enemy bombers. Men learned enough Russian to ask, "How about the next dance?" or "Do you have a husband?" They hitchhiked around the forbidding countryside and some managed to get as far as 200 miles inland before being escorted back to their ships. Finally,

in September 1943, the five Libertys steamed down Kola Strait and headed for home. After the heavy losses of convoys PQ17 and PQ18, it was decided to try to sneak some ships through unescorted. The Liberty ships Hugh Williamson, John H. B. Latrobe, John Walker, Richard B. Alvey, and William Clarke were dispatched from Iceland in this fashion in October and November of 1942. The William Clark, with a cargo of planes, tanks, auto tires, ammunition, and a crew of 71 men, was an easy mark for a waiting U-boat shortly after noon on 4 November. The sky was overcast, with a moderate sea running. Visibility was seven miles. The first torpedo hit amidships, flooding the engine room. The order was given to abandon ship, and after the lifeboats pulled away, two more torpedoes broke the vessel in two and sent her to the bottom. The St. Elstan and the Cape PaUister picked up the 41 survivors. Of 13 ships that were sent off independently to Russia in the fall and winter of 1942, three turned back, four were

sunk, one was wrecked, and five arrived safely at Murmansk. Out of 23 ships that sailed independently from Murmansk for Iceland, only one was sunk.

Another epic voyage was made by the *Richard Bland*, a new Liberty that sailed from Philadelphia on 1 May 1942. She left Halifax on 14 May in a 42-ship convoy for the United Kingdom, but with nine other ships, broke off from the main convoy ten days later enroute for Iceland, assembly point for the Murmansk convoys. In Iceland the *Bland* swung at anchor for a full month until the high command had made up its mind about sailing another Murmansk fleet. On 27 June she left with PQ17, ran into fog, hit some heavy ice, stove in the forepeak, then ran aground on rocks. Towed to Reykjavik, she spent several weeks discharging cargo and undergoing temporary repairs. Then she sailed to Loch Ewe, Scotland, to discharge cargo, have her hull repaired, and load the cargo again. She finally reached Murmansk on 27 December. On 1 March 1943, the *Bland* left Russia in convoy JW51A, which included J. L. M. Curry and Richard Bassett. At 0927 on the morning of 5 March, the American freighter *Executive* and the *Bland* were both torpedoed by a submarine. *Bland* dropped out of the convoy but for some reason the U-boat failed to finish her off and she rejoined just in time to help fight off an attack by a dozen Heinkel 111s. A stick of four bombs missed the *Bland* by a few skips and a jump. The next night a heavy gale with 40-knot winds scattered the convoy and by dawn *Bland* had lost it completely. The bridge steering gear went out and crewmen struggled to keep on course with emergency steering from the after steering platform. The heavy weather continued for several days. On 10 March, in intermittent snow squalls, poor visibility, and heavy seas, lookouts sighted a submarine periscope astern and seconds later a torpedo exploded in number four hold. Before the stern gun could be swung onto the target, thick snow obscured it. Another torpedo just missed the stern. Expecting the submarine to try again, the captain decided to abandon ship by lowering the two boats on the windward side, and bringing them along the leeward side. But in the heavy wind and sea the men lost control and the boats, each with four men on board, disappeared in the driving snow. There were not enough boats left for the 60 men still aboard ship, so the captain announced that some would have to remain aboard with him, hoping that the convoy escorts would answer their SOS. "I don't think she'll sink unless they put another torpedo into us," he said. A few minutes later the German submarine did exactly that. Navy Lieutenant William A. Carter, a passenger, saw the torpedo coming. When it hit we were surrounded by flames and water poured down on us. We [Carter and Ensign E. J. Neely, the Armed Guard commander] made our way to the boat deck and I ran through a sheet of flame to the port side, then down a ladder to the main deck. The boat [lifeboat] came past and I jumped in and managed to hang on, though I had my leg caught between the ship's side and the boat. I struggled to get the boat clear of the ship in heavy seas. Two men were holding on to the side of the boat by me and I tried to get them into the boat but their clothing was so heavy and the boat was so crowded that three of us were unable to haul them over the side. We held on to them as long as there was any use to hold on to them. Ensign Neely jumped over the side. The third mate and the third engineer reached for him and grabbed him but he was unconscious and couldn't help himself. They lost him. Soon after this, the ship broke in two just forward of the bridge; the stern section sank in a few minutes, the forward half floated free.

Carter's lifeboat was so crowded there was only a few inches of freeboard--too crowded even to row. The third mate put out a sea anchor and organized a bailing squad that kept the half-swamped craft afloat until the wind and seas began to abate. The men bailed all night, although several of them were nearly inert, apparently from shock. They signalled with flashlights, and after about ten hours they were picked up by the British destroyer *Impulsive*. Twenty-seven men were rescued from this lifeboat. Both of the boats that had been carried away from the ship prematurely were also picked up, with their eight occupants. The captain's boat was never found.

The J. L. M. Curry, which sailed from Russia with the Richard Bland, got caught in the same gale, on 6 March, and as she smashed into a heavy head sea there was a report like gunfire: the hull had cracked. An inspection showed ominous looking fissures in the deck forward and aft of number three hatch and at the after end of number four hatch. Captain Johnson decided to keep going but asked the convoy commodore to assign an escort to stand by. Their situation was dismal at best. "Thick snow squalls. Heavy westerly sea," said the log. "Ship rolling and plunging." Shortly after midnight there was a new break on the starboard side of the afterdeck. The forward deck was opening up all the time, and the sea condition was becoming more serious. Captain Johnson still hoped to get the ship to Reykjavik, but in order not to risk the lives of all on board, he decided to send away all but a skeleton crew and so signalled to the St. Elstan, a small British escort ship. The next morning a new split ran through the starboard deep tank at the bottom of number three hold. By 0830 the Curry was "working very badly in all breaks." The rest of the story was in the log of HMS St. Elstan, which picked up the narrative of events from the log of the sinking freighter.

0830 a.m. L.L.M. Curry prepared to abandon ship.

0915. First boat away. Picked up boat's company and proceeded to screen J.L.M.C.

1000. Two more boats picked up.

1100. Motor boat making three trips with remaining crew. Last boat alongside at 1112 with master on board.

1115. Opened fire on J.L.M.C. with four inch, using S.A.P. and H.E.

Three shells in engine room on starboard side. Holes below water line. Spurted oil from fuel tanks. Three shells in number two hold; under forward gun and under master's accommodations, setting fire to latter. 1204. Opened fire on port side of J.L.M.C., setting fire to bridge and midships accommodations. Ceased firing after dropping depth

charges from starboard thrower to a position on port side amidships Ship last seen listing 30 degrees to starboard and sinking. If Johnson had not decided to abandon ship when he did, it would have been too late, for in another twelve hours the storm had grown to a full gale, with violent snow squalls and high swells, conditions that might have made it impossible to get lifeboats away from the sinking ship. Soon after the St. Elstan had picked up the Curry's crew, the American freighter Puerto Rican, in the same convoy, sent an SOS. She had been torpedoed and was sinking fast. The St. Elstan was ordered to search for her, and passed through an extensive oil patch; found an empty and waterlogged lifeboat, but no survivors. It was learned later that the Puerto Rican had straggled from the convoy during the storm and was 25 miles astern when she was torpedoed. Only one boat could be lowered because the davits and ropes were coated with ice, but it could not be released from the falls and capsized, throwing its occupants into the sea. Eight men swam to a small raft, which was found by the St. Elstan two days later. By then, only one man was alive.

When the ship was hit, he had taken time to don one of the neck-to-toe rubber survival suits with which American ships on the Russian run were equipped. The suit saved his life, but his feet were frozen and had to be amputated in a hospital in Iceland. While searching for survivors of the Puerto Rican, the St. Elstan took time to shepherd the Liberty ship J. H. B. Latrobe, straggling from the convoy with steering-engine trouble and a damaged propeller. That made a second close call for the Latrobe; running alone from Iceland toward Murmansk on 5 November 1942, she had been attacked by eight German torpedo planes. All eight torpedoes missed, because, perhaps, of a stream of fire from the Liberty's guns. After the planes left, the officers decided that, since their position was known, there would

be another and probably heavier attack and that it would be folly to go on. The Latrobe returned to Reykjavik to await a convoy, a decision that saved some 7,000 tons of trucks, planes, heavy machinery, food, and guns worth many millions of dollars. Another ship nearly done in by weather on the Russian run was the James Bowie, whose crew learned what it meant to fight for survival against the fury of the sea. The ship left Loch Ewe on 15 February 1943 in a convoy bound for Murmansk but had to change course four days later when "mountainous seas and strong winds" loosened the lifeboats and shifted the deck cargo. Four days later there was "a loud jarring report" and the engine room reported an 18-inch-wide crack in the hull. Water was pouring into the engine spaces. All bilge pumps were cut in to handle the flood. An inspection showed that the break extended from the main deck through the store room above the engine spaces and down into the engine room. According to the voyage report they were from then on their own: Convoy out of sight. Master ordered all ships personnel out on deck at lifeboat stations with lifejackets on. Deck department rigged heavy wire cables drawn taught with turnbuckles and winches to hold the break. Cable was drawn from bitt at number three hatch to bitt at number four hatch. We proceeded with all possible speed to Loch Ewe for temporary repairs. A piece of steel was welded over the split and the James Bowie later went to Newcastle-on-Tyne for a complete repair job.



The German battleship Scharnhorst, which had lurked in Norwegian fjords for years threatening convoys, was finally lured to her destruction off the north coast of Norway in December of 1943. The bait was the 19-ship convoy JW55B, including Will Rogers and eight other Libertys, bound from Loch Ewe, Scotland, to Murmansk and heavily protected by cruisers, destroyers, and the Duke of York. This mighty battleship was screening both northbound convoy JW55B and southbound convoy BA55A, one or both of which, in the opinion of the Admiralty, would be spotted by German submarine or air reconnaissance and would be too tempting, under conditions of the winter Arctic darkness, for the Germans to resist. Unaware of the presence of Duke of York and eager to smash convoy JW55B, the Germans dispatched the Scharnhorst from Altenfjord on Christmas Day. U-boats and bombers shadowed the convoy in advance of the sortie but did no damage. The log of the Will Rogers for 23 December noted: "General quarters. All men to battle stations. Two enemy aircraft approaching on the port quarter. Escort vessels sent up effective barrage, driving planes off." On 26 December, the British cruiser Belfast made radar contact on the Scharnhorst and alerted the Duke of York, still 125 miles away. The Belfast, Sheffield, and Norfolk and escorting destroyers stayed between the raider and the convoy, hoping Duke of York would close the gap before the Scharnhorst's destroyer scouts

sighted the merchantmen. The British cruiser fired on the Scharnhorst briefly, but the Germans, for some unknown reason, did not return the fire, and the cruisers were undamaged. The Duke of York, making top speed in heavy seas, was headed on an intercept course for the Scharnhorst, although neither ship was aware of the fact at the time. On the evening of 26 December, the Duke of York made radar contact on the Scharnhorst, returning to Norway after failure to find the convoy. Her protecting German destroyer had already gone home. Soon after this Scharnhorst was illuminated by a parachute flare from the Duke of York and the battle began.

For once Liberty ships were not in the fight, but some of them saw it. Ensign John W. Broderick, armed guard officer on the Will Rogers, watched from a distance, and saw gunfire and parachute flares on the port beam. He knew that he was seeing a surface battle between the escorts and enemy warships. Aboard Will Rogers and the other merchantmen, sailors watched the distant flashes of the guns, hoping the enemy ships would not break through and run rampant through the "sitting ducks." For two hours the orange-red streaks of flame lit the sky, while the freighters rolled and plunged onward toward Murmansk and the Scharnhorst tried to evade the 14-inch shells of Duke of York. After 77 rounds had been fired, British Admiral Fraser ordered the battleship to cease fire and sent the cruisers Belfast and Jamaica and four destroyers in to finish off the crippled Scharnhorst with torpedoes. Only 36 men of her crew of 1,940 were picked up by the British. Not one of her officers survived.

Although the Scharnhorst was gone, there was no pause in German attempts to break up the Murmansk convoys. A submarine put two torpedoes into the Penelope Barker enroute from Iceland to Murmansk with convoy JW56A on 25 January 1944. The second explosion blew the 20-millimeter guns out of the tubs, knocked down the stack, blew two lifeboats overboard, and partially destroyed the bridge. The ship was loaded with tanks, locomotives, and flat cars, and went down in ten minutes. Survivors were picked up by HMS Savage. Eleven men were killed. The British Liberty Samsuva, in convoy RA60 from Archangel to Scotland on 29 September 1944, swerved to avoid hitting the Edward H. Crockett when she was torpedoed by a German submarine. A minute later the Samsuva was also torpedoed, and all the black gang on watch were killed. The ship was then sunk by the HMS Corsica. Survivors were taken aboard the Rathlin which, with the Zamalek, rescued hundreds of men from torpedoed ships in the North Atlantic and Arctic. The Crockett's crew, except for one man killed in the engine room, were also picked up by the Zamalek; the ship was sunk by friendly gunfire. Planes and submarines haunted the convoys almost to the last days of German participation in the war. The Horace Gray, carrying 7,500 tons of potash, was torpedoed on 14 February 1945 at the entrance to Kola Inlet. She was beached at Tyuva Bay, a total loss, but with no casualties. The Thomas Scott was torpedoed shortly after leaving Kola Inlet en route to Scotland in convoy RA64. The 40 Norwegian refugees on board, together with the merchant crew and armed guard, were picked up by a British destroyer and were landed at Vianga, Russia. A Russian destroyer attempted to tow the ship but it broke up and sank. A Russian salvage tug was successful in saving the Horace Bushnell after she was torpedoed near the White Sea on 20 March 1945, in convoy JW65. The engine room was demolished by the explosion, and five men were killed. The Bushnell looked more like a submarine than a ship by the time the tug beached her at Tereberski, and she probably did not sail again, although there was one report the Russians had salvaged and repaired her. In the same convoy the Thomas Donaldson, carrying ammunition and locomotives, was torpedoed with the loss of four men. Escorts took her in tow, but she sank a few hours later.

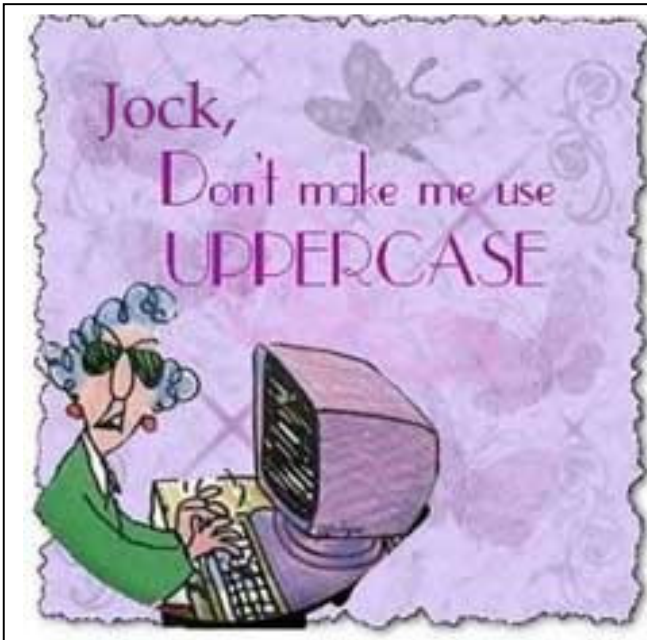
The story of the Russian run had a fitting finale in the last voyage of the Henry Bacon, which left the White Sea in February of 1945 in the 34-ship convoy RA64. On board were 35 Norwegian refugees--men, women and children--who had fled to Russia during the Nazi invasion and were being sent to England. The convoy cleared North Cape and started down the Norwegian coast. On 18 February a violent storm with 60-mile winds whipped up turbulent seas and completely scattered the ships. By the time the escorts had rounded up the strays, several freighters had been torpedoed by U-boats. The British escort sloop Bluebell was sunk by U711, with only one survivor. Four days later

another storm scattered the fleet again. Some ships hove to, while others ran before tremendous seas that rolled a British escort carrier 45 degrees and nearly sent her aircraft over the side. Again the escorts rounded up all the strays except the Henry Bacon, which had lagged some 50 miles behind because of trouble with the steering engine. It took the engineers several hours to make repairs, and by the time the ship resumed her course she was a tempting target for planes or U-boats. Captain Alfred Carini back-tracked up the course for an hour hoping to find the other ships, but with no luck. By that time he had not slept for 45 hours

and kept awake by pacing the bridge and drinking black coffee. At 1415 on the afternoon of 25 February, the lookout in the crow's nest reported: "Airplanes. Sounds like a lot of them." Even against the whine of the wind, Carini could hear them and sounded the general alarm. Men tumbled out of bunks and grabbed helmets, lifejackets, and extra clothing for protection against the wintry blasts of wind on the open deck. The steward mustered hiscooks and messmen to break out bandages, splints, and anesthetics, covering the wardroom tables with blankets in preparation for battle casualties. Below decks, all the black gang could do was listen--and wait. Gunners jerked the canvas covers off the guns none too soon. Big, black Junkers 88s broke out of the overcast, flying 30 feet above the wave tops. There was no need for the Armed Guard officer on the bridge to give the order to fire. Every gun that could bear went into instant action. Carini counted 23 planes. Twenty-three bombers against one ship. Heavy odds for even a cruiser or a battleship. Aircraft carriers had been sunk by fewer planes than this. There was no nearby ship the Henry Bacon could call for help. A bomber dropped a torpedo 500 yards away on the port quarter, and Carini yelled, "Hard a port!" The helmsman spun the wheel hard over and the torpedo just missed. Another plane started a torpedo run several hundred yards off the bow and the 3-inch gun blew it to bits. Pieces of flaming aircraft fell into the sea just off the bow. Another plane flew into a wall of 20-millimeter shells which sliced it in two and sent the pilot's compartment cartwheeling into the sea. So many planes had only to persist to be successful against one ship. A torpedo finally hit the Henry Bacon in number three hold on the starboard side, forward. The vessel shuddered as a 50-foot column of water shot up above the bulwarks. The spray was still falling along the deck when the second torpedo hit. Carini ordered abandon ship. If he waited any longer, a third torpedo might send the vessel down without a chance to launch the boats. "Refugees first," he called to the mate. "Get the passengers on the boat deck as fast as you can. Tell them to bring lots of clothes." The German bombers, seeing that their target was doomed, broke off the attack and withdrew, with one skimming the wave tops as black smoke poured from an engine.

The Bacon carried four lifeboats, plus a number of rafts, but men on a raft would have little chance of survival in winter seas. Carini maneuvered the ship to provide a lee for lowering the boats. They would be lucky to get even two boats safely into the water. The first boat lowered away successfully and pushed off. When the second boat was safely overside, Third Mate Joseph Scott counted the passengers. "I can take six," he shouted. "Six more ... and hurry." Several merchant crewmen and Navy gunners climbed down into the boat as it rose on the crest of a wave. The ship was settling and waves were breaking over the bulwarks. Chief Engineer Donald Haviland looked up at a young Navy gunner on deck. The boy couldn't have been more than 17 years old. "Put me alongside," he said to the third mate. "Let that kid have my place. It won't matter so much if I don't get back." Haviland climbed back to the deck while the sailor scurried down the scramblenets into the boat, which pulled quickly away. The ship was going down soon, and they didn't want to be sucked under with her. A raft with several men on it bobbed some distance away. The wind and waves were taking the lifeboats away from the ship, and no pulling on the oars would bring them close enough to pick up the men on the raft. Men in the boats saw Haviland, Boatswain Halcomb Lammon, and several other seamen on the foredeck, probably making a raft out of dunnage. Captain Carini waved from the bridge. The boats drifted off into the mist as the Henry Bacon, her ensign snapping proudly at the gaff, settled slowly beneath the sea. By the time convoy escorts arrived to look for survivors there were only a few boards and crates to mark where the Henry Bacon and 22 of her men went down.

Said the Maritime Commission: "It was a splendid defense by a merchant ship against overwhelming odds and of discipline of the highest order amongst the ship's company." The men of the Henry Bacon had added a gallant chapter to the history of the American merchant marine. But the heroic deeds of ships and men that braved the hazards of the convoy routes to carry aid to Russia in World War II were soon forgotten in Murmansk. *Twenty-five years later, there is not a single testimonial there to the Allied merchant seamen and their naval comrades who died to keep supplies flowing to the Russian front. The Murmansk museum contains many relics of World War II, but no remembrance whatsoever of the wartime convoys or of the 97 ships and countless men lost in making the hazardous Murmansk Run.*



Father O'Malley rose from his bed one morning. It was a fine spring day in his new Ballina parish. He walked to the window of his bedroom to get a deep breathe of the beautiful day outside. He then noticed there was a donkey lying dead in the middle of his front lawn. Not knowing who else to call, he promptly called the local police station. The conversation went like this:  
 "Good morning. This is Sergeant Jones. How might I help you?"  
 "And the best of the day ter yer good self. This is Father O'Malley at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church. There's a donkey lying dead right in der middle of me front lawn"  
 Sergeant Jones, considering himself to be quite a wit, replied with a smirk,  
 "Well now Father, it was always my impression that you people took care of the last rites!"  
 There was dead silence on the line for a long moment and then Father O'Malley replied:  
 "Ah, to be sure, that is true; but we are also obliged to notify the next of kin."

**Did you know?**

When decapitation ceased to be the extreme penalty in England and was superseded by death by hanging it was at one time the custom for the executioner to tie together the wrists and thumbs of the prisoner by means of a short cord in order to intimate to the public that the prisoner was under sentence of death. In the event of an acquittal the hands were left free.



"Man who leaps off cliff jumps to conclusion".

## Upholder`s Patrol - May 1941



One of the Royal Navy`s most outstanding submariners was without question the skilfull and daring Lieutenant-Commander David Wanklyn VC, DSO who commanded HM submarine **Upholder** for a total of twenty-four patrols during World War 2. Up to May 1941 he had completed six patrols in the Mediterranean, working out of either Gibraltar or Malta. During one of these patrols he sank the 5,000 ton **Antonietta Lauro** off Lampedusa, the 2,500 ton **Arcturus** , the 8,000 ton **Leverkusen** as well as boarding and setting ablaze the 2,500 ton m.v. **Arta**.

It was his seventh patrol in the southern approaches to the Straits of Messina in May 1941 that won him the VC .

On 20th May Wanklyn sighted a 4,000 ton tanker, two supply ships and an escort. He fired off two torpedoes, but the bow cap of the fourth tube failed to open. The tanker was hit and sank. In the counter-attack his Asdic and hydrophones were put out of action by the depth charges. Three days later on the 23rd he torpedoed the Vichy French tanker **Alberta** .

First light on the 24th found him with only two torpedoes remaining: one was believed to be defective and the other had the faulty bow cap.

Despite this both were prepared for action. At about 20:30 Wanklyn sighted three large liners being used as high-speed troopships and protected by five escorts, that he deduced were on a night-time dash to Libya.

The enemy ships altered course, which presented Wanklyn with a more favourable angle of attack - providing he acted swiftly. Although there was the benefit of a moderate sea running he had no listening gear and only the two torpedoes... He penetrated the escort`s screen and fired both. Two explosions were heard! He had hit the 17,800 ton **Conte Rosso** which quickly sank, passing so close to the **Upholder** that some of her wires scraped her hull!

Wanklyn and his crew then had the terror of enduring a concerted attack by the enemy escorts who fired off a total of 37 depth charges. Despite suffering some damage he was able to make off and escape back to Malta.

It was for this exploit that he was awarded the Victoria Cross. A fellow submarine commander, Alistair Mars later referred to him as "The Immortal Wanklyn".

**Upholder** went on to complete a total of twenty-four patrols and eventually sank many more merchant ships as well as two destroyers and two enemy submarines...

Sadly almost exactly a year after her most famous exploit she was lost with all hands...



# Get out of the car!

*(This is supposedly a true account recorded in the Police Log of Sarasota, Florida.)*

An elderly Florida lady did her shopping and, upon returning to her car, found four males in the act of leaving with her vehicle.

She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, proceeding to scream at the top of her lungs, "I have a gun, and I know how to use it! Get out of the car!"

The four men didn't wait for a second threat. They got out and ran like mad.

The lady, somewhat shaken, then proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and got into the driver's seat. She was so shaken that she could not get her key into the ignition.

She tried and tried, and then she realised why. It was for the same reason she had wondered why there was a football, a Frisbee and two 12-packs of beer in the front seat.

A few minutes later, she found her own car parked four or five spaces farther down.

She loaded her bags into

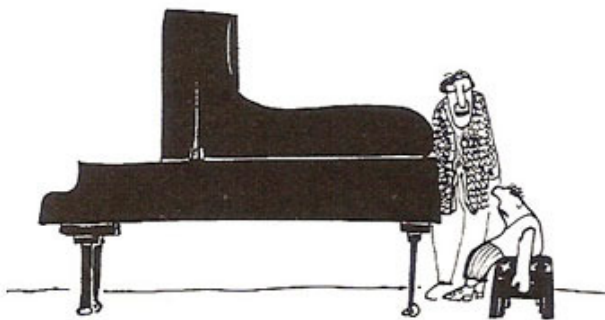
the car and drove to the police station to report her mistake.

The sergeant to whom she told the story couldn't stop laughing.

He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four pale men were reporting a car jacking by a mad, elderly woman described as white, less than five feet tall, glasses, curly white hair, and carrying a large handgun.

No charges were filed.

Moral of the story? If you're going to have a senior moment . . . make it memorable.



"For God's sake, Jock, the other end!  
Don't you remember from last week?"

During World War II, the captured Allied agents of Stalag 15 were attempting yet another daring prison break. On this particular night, Major O'Rorke and Lieutenant Flanagan from Northern Ireland were chosen to try to cut their way through the bars of the prison gate. They were hard at work when the siren sounded, and the floodlights caught them in the act. As the German officer led them away, O'Rorke said, "We were so careful. How did you ever catch us?" The German replied, "It's very simple.

*Wait for it . . . . .*

Somehow, I can always tell .... *when Irish spies are filing.*"

An old lady dies and goes to heaven. She's chatting it up with St. Peter at the Pearly Gates when all of a sudden she hears the most awful, blood curdling screams.

Don't worry about that,' says St. Peter, 'It's only someone having the holes put into her shoulder blades for the wings.' The old lady looks a little uncomfortable but carries on with the conversation.

Ten minutes later, there are more blood curdling screams. 'Oh my God,' says the old lady, 'now what is happening?' 'Not to worry,' says St. Peter, 'She's just having her head drilled to fit the halo.'

'I can't do this,' says the old lady, 'I'm going to hell.' 'You can't go there,' says St. Peter. 'You'll be raped and taken advantage of.'

'Maybe so,' says the old lady, 'but I've already got the holes for that.'

**"Man who fish in other man's well often catch crabs"**



A little silver-haired lady calls her neighbour and says; "Please come over here and help me. I have a killer jigsaw puzzle, and I can't figure out how to get started."

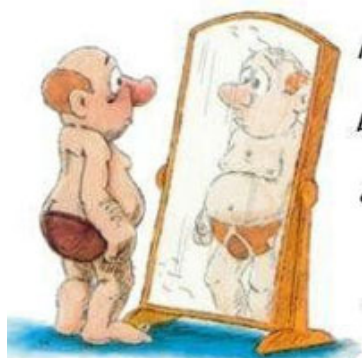
Her neighbour asks, "What is it supposed to be when it's finished?"

The little silver haired lady says, "According to the picture on the box, it's a rooster."

Her neighbour decides to go over and help with the puzzle.

She lets him in and shows him where she has the puzzle spread all over the table. He studies the pieces for a moment, then looks at the box, then turns to her and says, "First of all, no matter what we do, we're not going to be able to assemble these pieces into anything resembling a rooster."

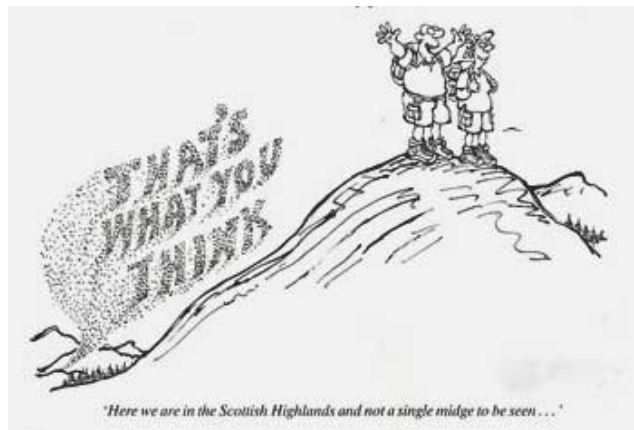
He takes her hand and says, "Secondly, I want you to relax. Let's have a nice cup of tea, and then," he said with a deep sigh "Let's put all the Corn Flakes back in the box."



*If you look in the mirror  
and see a beer belly,  
bald head, big red nose,  
varicose veins, and a  
complexion like leather,  
..Look on the  
bright side....  
at least your eyesight  
is OK!!*

Being a modest man, when I checked into my hotel on a recent trip, I said to the lady at the registration desk "I hope the porn channel in my room is disabled."

To which she replied, "No, it's regular porn, you sick bastard?"



*"Here we are in the Scottish Highlands and not a single midge to be seen..."*

**"The hailstones leaped from the pavement, just like maggots when you fry them in hot grease".**

Ed and Nancy met while on a singles cruise and Ed fell head over heels for her. When they discovered they lived in the same city only a few miles apart Ed was ecstatic. He immediately started asking her out when they got home. Within a couple of weeks, Ed had taken Nancy to dance clubs, restaurants, concerts, movies, and museums. Ed became convinced that Nancy was indeed his soul mate and true love. Every date seemed better than the last.

On the one-month anniversary of their first dinner on the cruise ship, Ed took Nancy to a fine restaurant. While having cocktails and waiting for their salad, Ed said, "I guess you can tell I'm very much in love with you. I'd like a little serious talk before our relationship continues to the next stage. So, before I get a box out of my jacket and ask you a life changing question, it's only fair to warn you, I'm a total golf nut. I play golf, I read about golf, I watch golf on TV. In short, I eat, sleep, and breathe golf. If that's going to be a problem for us, you'd better say so now!"

Nancy took a deep breath and responded, "Ed, that certainly won't be a problem. I love you as you are and I love golf too; but, since we're being totally honest with each other you need to know that for the last five years I've been a hooker."

Ed said, "I bet it's because you're not keeping your wrists straight when you hit the ball."