

ARCTIC ECHOES

2016

VICTORY DAY

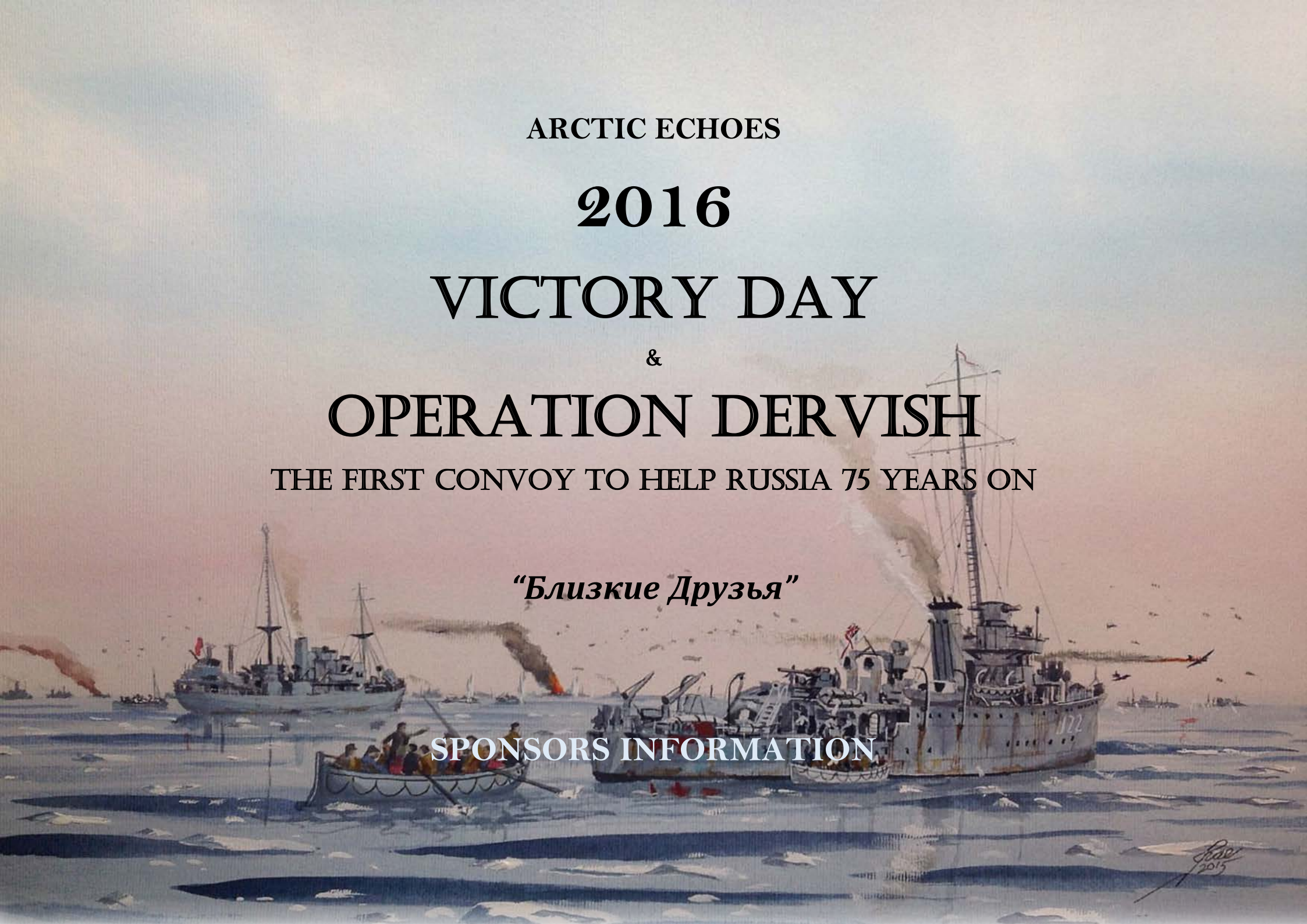
&

OPERATION DERVISH

THE FIRST CONVOY TO HELP RUSSIA 75 YEARS ON

“Близкие Друзья”

SPONSORS INFORMATION



2016

We will remember.....

It is impossible to think of Victory Day without looking back to the Genesis of the worst conflict the world has ever known and remembering all those who lost their lives to bring about the great victory of 1945.

This year, 2016, we mark the 75th anniversary of the treacherous Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Within weeks Great Britain responded with a convoy to help her new Ally in the war against Fascism. Operation Dervish, the first convoy of very many, sailed on August 10th. 1941 arriving on the 31st. It took with it Wing 151, a new RAF unit that delivered Hurricane fighters and 500 men to teach the Soviet Airforce in their use, pilots of this Wing went immediately into action defending Murmansk, an operation for which the veteran survivors were recently awarded the Ushakov Medal. Over the life of the convoys 3,000 more of these fighters would be delivered.

As the Nazis reached Leningrad and began that epic siege, so heroically resisted, the great composer Shostakovich, still living in the beleaguered City, completed his brilliant Symphony Number Seven, orchestral performances of which around the world stimulated incalculable support for his occupied motherland.

There is not a family in Russia that did not lose a mother, father or brother, there are many who lost all, these souls are now remembered in the growing movement of the Immortal Regiment.

We remember too that this is the 75th anniversary of the ill-starred flight by Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, to Scotland in an attempt to persuade Great Britain to join Germany against Soviet Russia. Some Axis! Some rejection! We do not forget that 70 years ago the Nuremberg trials took place to bring justice to a world that had forgotten the meaning of the word for the previous decade.

The mortal regiment of our veterans of all Nations in the coalition that defeated global Fascism is diminished every year as time and nature take them from us. In the time left before they join the ranks of the Immortals it is our solemn duty to recognise their sacrifice and service by bringing them together to the best of our ability to remember their historic deeds.

The victory Day committee and the HMS Belfast Association have joined forces this year to produce the following programme for our veterans and our visitors from Russia representing Soviet armed forces from the Great Patriotic War. Now we call on you, our allies in Peace and friends in life to help us raise the funding to bring this programme to life. We need sponsors to contribute whatever they can either in general funds or for a specific aspect of the programme detailed in this document. We thank you for whatever you can do.

Bank details for transfers;-

- **Lloyds Bank**
- **Sort code 30-92-86**
- **Account #00489436**
- **IBAN GB28LOYD30928600489436**
- **BICLOYDGB21092**

Plans to mark these events:

May 09th. 2016 Victory Day

This year victory Day falls on a Monday, we therefore have laid plans for the following arrangements for hosting our customary group of former Soviet war veterans who will join us, and our British veterans, under the leadership of Colonel Goncharov from the British Embassy in Moscow.

- **6th. May. Friday: Arrive to UK, accommodated in the Ibis Hotel Southwark.**
- **7th May. Saturday: Train to Cambridge to visit the Churchill Archives, meet the curator, and have a tour of WSC's wartime papers covering 1941, this will include insight to the ill-starred flight of Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess shortly before the Nazi invasion of the USSR. This will be followed by sight-seeing in Cambridge and overnight accommodation.**
- **8th. May. Sunday: Minibus to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford airfield where they will see the wreckage of the Me110 in which Hess made his flight (Not on general display) and be shown aircraft delivered to the USSR by convoys over the course of the War. Special attention will be paid to the Hurricanes and the importance of this marque of fighter. Return to London.**
- **9th. May. Monday: Solemn commemoration ceremony organised by the Soviet War Memorial Trust at the soviet War Memorial in Harmsworth Park, next to the Imperial War Museum attended by all CIS Ambassadors. Then transfer by coach with British veterans to HMS Belfast for lunch hosted by HMS Belfast Association with presentations, lunch, drinks, friendship and a showing of the film "Last Witness" as an example of warmth and comradeship between the veterans of the Arctic Campaign. Return to hotel by minibus.**
- **10th. May. Return to Moscow.**

Sponsorship donations required for Victory Day

- **Visas facilities for up to 10 veterans from Russia including carers for the group. £1,000**
- **Air tickets for the group. £2,000 but could be nil, subject to support by Aeroflot**
- **Minibus hire for use by the veterans group in London/Cambridge to include collection from Heathrow and travel to each of the above event locations. £750**
- **Hotel accommodation in London and one night in Cambridge. £2,750**
- **Subsistence for meals. £500**
- **Event costs where applicable (The reception aboard HMS Belfast is to be hosted by the HMS Belfast Association) £2,000**

Estimated total funding needs to be shared by sponsors: £9,000

OPERATION DERVISH

The first gift of a friend to a friend

August 1941



DERVISH MEMORIES

We were there....

“We sailed out of the river and into the Irish Sea, it was August 12, 1941 the first convoy of war materials to Russia, port of disembarkment Archangel and what awaited us was anybody’s guess”.

“Archangel was like something we had never seen before, everything was made of logs, houses, halls and stores were all built of logs, all the roads were made of logs and you could not smoke in the street. They were little log buildings scattered about and to smoke you had to go into one of these, they held ten people, so we would sit and smoke with the locals”.

“The Hurricanes have now been assembled at a local airfield and are to be flown to our destination, we board the train and the support equipment, MT and spare propellers are loaded on the wagons at the back. The loudspeaker in the ship is playing “There’s no place like home”.

“On the Leningrad line we meet ambulance trains coming from the front packed with wounded. At the railside the dead are taken off and loaded onto horse carts for burial. The people carrying out this task are beside themselves with grief and a sad silence settles over our train”.

“The aircraft fell to the ground in a cloud of dust and smoke, they were both killed, we buried them on top of the hill overlooking the kola inlet, mighty sad it was”.

“The snow got deeper and deeper but our huts were underground and quite snug. They rolled the airfield all night to pack down the snow so we could fly”.

“The Wing had shot down fifteen enemy aircraft for one lost in combat, but it was now December and time to go”.

“I handed over my sheepskin coat, my hat, gloves and long felt boots to the Russians; To Toymen I left my Hurricane, Cyril left his to Alexei. We walked through the snow to say goodbye to Lofty, a huge Russian from Siberia. We gave him our gramophone and records. As we walked away through the snow he broke down and cried”.

“I remember many things but in particular the unfortunate few who lost their lives”.

“On the way out we tried to learn a few Russian songs, “Song of the Steppes” was one of them”.

“None of us were to know what immense good fortune we had with that first convoy, many later convoys that followed our route suffered appalling losses”.

“Arriving at the airfield we found the Russians had built a brick barracks, the only brick building there, we called it the Kremlin”.

“So there you are, very little time when you look at a calendar to do what was done. August to December to sail into Northern waters, move a Wing and two squadrons from Yorkshire to Russia, fly operationally, and teach some of Russia’s best pilots to fly the first of the future supplies of aircraft as well as moving back again. Without the Royal and Merchant navies it could not have been achieved or for that matter those unknown planners in Whitehall and Moscow. Many years after I look at the squadron crests on the wall of the RAF club and seeing the Red Star under 81 and 134 I feel proud having been to witness what we did”.

DERVISH PLANS

The Dervish celebrations will take place mainly in northern Russia. We therefore need to plan to send the biggest possible contingent of veterans to join with their Russian colleagues in what must be close to the last time we will be able to do this. We have already identified a group of survivors from wing 151, the Arctic convoy veterans associations and the HMS Belfast Association, the ship herself being a famous Arctic veteran symbol of Anglo-Russian friendship.

The Russian celebrations will take place in Archangel, Murmansk, Saint Petersburg and Petrozavodsk with a full programme for those attending. These celebrations are supported by both the British Embassy and Consulate General as well as the highest regional authorities in Russia. They are also fully supported by Russian veterans associations.

The organisers have commissioned from a British marine artist a special souvenir book of paintings illustrating specific incidents of the convoy era. The book will be in English and Russian available to all who attend the celebrations. We need to cover the printing costs.

Funds are required to support the travel and accommodation of the British veterans and their carers. We anticipate some significant support in accommodation and local transport within Russia but still need to cover costs of their travel and associated expenses.

The present provisional budget is £7000. At this stage we would appreciate any interested sponsors contacting us directly so that we are able to refine this figure as we move forward and are able to contribute to it specific amounts.

Please join us and be a part of our history!