

Patron:

President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson

Organized by:

The Institute of History at the University of Iceland and Global Center

With the support of:

The Embassies of Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States

The Arctic Convoys: A Lifeline Across the Atlantic is a conference commemorating the Arctic Convoys which, during the Second World War, brought food, munitions, and other goods from Europe and North America through Iceland to the Soviet Union, making a significant contribution to the Allied forces' defence against the Axis Powers in Europe. The Arctic Convoys were a vital life-support to the defence of Russia when the Nazi assault had led its army deep into the country. The conference will be attended by veterans of the convoys (both naval and merchant seamen), historians and other academics, students, journalists and others interested in the Arctic Convoys, the Second World War and its relevance for modern times.

Wednesday 9 July

17.30 – 19.00 Welcome Reception onboard
HMS Exeter

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch at the University of Iceland

13.30 – 15.00 **PANEL 2: *The Convoys, An Overview in Specifics***

Thursday 10 July

Location: Háskólatorg, University of Iceland

8.00 – 9.00 Arrival and registration

9.00 – 9.15 Welcome address by
President Ólafur Ragnar
Grímsson

9.15 – 10.00 **Keynote Presentation:** Captain Richard Woodman, Author of *Arctic Convoys 1941-1945*, "Against the Odds: Arctic Convoys in Context". Introduced by H.E. Anna Blauveldt, Canada's Ambassador to Iceland

10.00 – 10.15 **Question & Answer session**

10.15 – 10.30 **Coffee / Photo Exhibition**

10.30 – 12.00 **PANEL 1: *The Convoys, An Overview***

Chair: Ms. Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir, Director of the Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for Small State Studies, University of Iceland

Prof. Thór Whitehead, Professor of History, University of Iceland, "The Strategic Importance of Iceland, 1939-1945"

Prof. Mikhail Suprun, Head of Dept of History, Pomor State University of Arkhangelsk, "Lend-Lease and the Northern Convoys"

Mr. Harald Henriksen, author of "*Murmansk Convoyerne*" "Land Operations against the Arctic Convoys"

Chair: British Ambassador to Iceland

Dr Malcolm Llewellyn-Jones MBE, Historian, Naval Historical Branch, UK Department of Defence, "Convoy PQ17 – Achieving Historical Balance"

Mr Nick Hewitt, Interpretation Officer on *HMS Belfast*, "Guns in the Night: HMS Belfast and the Battle of the North Cape, 26 December 1943"

Dr Jeff Noakes, Historian (Second World War), Canadian War Museum, "Covering the Convoys: A Canadian Anti-submarine Squadron in Iceland, 1944-1945"

15.00 – 15.30 **Coffee / Photo Exhibition**

15.30 – 17.00 **PANEL 3: *The Soviet Union and the Convoys***

Chair: Dr Gudni Th. Jóhannesson, Assistant Professor, Reykjavík University

Prof Anatoly Lifshits, Professor of RIS and Convoy Veteran, States Polytechnical University, "The operations of the ships of the Russian North Fleet Squadron in the Allied Polar Convoys"

Professor Anatoly Uvarov, Presidium Officer of Arctic Allied Convoy Club "The Forgotten Battles of the Second World War"

Mr Iosif Rabinovich, Historian Journalist Consultant, Neptune Exhibition, "Rodina: The Untold Story of the Soviet Merchant Ship and its Crew"

17.00 Photo Exhibition

18.00 – 19.30 Reception at the Russian Embassy hosted by the Sponsoring Embassies

Eugine Akimov, “The History of the Archangelsk School of Auxiliary Vessels of the White Sea Flotilla”

Alexey Kozin, “The tragedy of S.S. Induna”

Anna Datsenko, “British and American Veterans’ Letters as a Source of Culture Studies”

15.00 – 15.30 Coffee / Photo Exhibition

15.30 – 17.00 Question and Answer session with Veterans

Chair: Jón Sigurdsson, Reykjavík University

Panel Members:

Raymond Ball (UK)

George Kost (US)

Erik Kragelund (Denmark)

Anatoly Lifshits (Russia)

Pétur Ólafsson (Iceland)

17.00 – 17.30 Summary Discussion:

Captain Juri Aleksandrov, Co-Founder and President of Russian Polar Convoy Club, “Polar Convoy – Past Present Future”

19.00 Dinner hosted by the President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, at the presidential residence, Bessastadir

Saturday 12 July

Commemoration Day in Reykjavík

10.00 Ceremony and wreath laying at Fossvogur Cemetery, organized by the Russian Embassy

Lunch in Reykjavík

Tour of Icelandic Coast Guard vessel Ódinn at Reykjavík Maritime Museum

15.00 – 19.00 Tour to Blue Lagoon (optional)

Sunday 13 July

9.00 – 17.00 Golden Circle Tour (optional)

Friday 11 July

Location: Háskólatorg, University of Iceland

8.45 – 10.15 PANEL 4: *The Convoys from a National Perspective*

Chair: H.E. Margit Tveiten, Norway’s Ambassador to Iceland

Professor Guri Hjeltnes, Professor at the Norwegian School of Management BI, “Lifeline to Britain and Russia – the contribution of the Norwegian fleet and convoys”

Mr Michael Walling, Author of *Bloodstained Sea – The U.S. Coast Guard in the Battle of the Atlantic, 1941-1944*, “The United States Forces’ Role in the Arctic Convoys: The Brotherhood of the ‘F.B.I.’”

Dr. Augustine Meaher, Newman College, University of Melbourne, “So far from Home: Australians and the ‘Russian Run’”

10.15 – 11.00 Coffee / Photo Exhibition

11.00 – 12.30 PANEL 5: *Canada and the Arctic Convoys*

Chair: Dr Marc Milner, University of New Brunswick

Dr Alec Douglas, former Director, Directorate of History at National Defence, “Canada, the Allies and the convoy system, 1939-1945”

Dr Roger Sarty, Dept of History, Wilfrid Laurier University, “The Royal Canadian Air Force in Iceland: 162 Squadron’s Deployment and Early Operations, 1943-4”

Mr Mike Whitby, Senior Naval Historian, Directorate of History and Heritage, “The Royal Canadian Navy and the Arctic Convoys”

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch at the University of Iceland

14.00 – 15.00 Presentations by students of the Murmansk Gymnasium #9. Introduced by Mr Valery Polyakov, Chargé d’Affaires at Russia’s Embassy in Iceland