

Murmansk Marine Steamship Line Celebrates Its
Fiftieth Anniversary

It is difficult to be objective when assessing a collective with which one has grown over years of joint work and experiences. And should someone find this story to be somewhat biased, he should understand that the fleet and the people about which I speak today really do merit warm words.

I first encountered the North upon graduating from S.O. Makarov School of Advanced Naval Engineering in Leningrad. After that it was half a year of practical training with the Northern Fleet as a warrant officer. I recall how I was astonished by the harsh beauty of the Arctic, where the black snow-covered crags framed the southern edge of the Arctic Ocean, where the dearth of winter colours gave way to the multitude of colours of a spectacular arctic autumn. Phenologists claim that the notion of summer exists here only on the calendar, and according to phenological signs, a late and long spring immediately gives way to a stormy and short autumn. But that's only in Murmansk and on the Kola Peninsula. The sea lanes stretch even further north, into the boundless kingdom of ice and bitter cold.

Later on I had occasion, while working in the USSR Ministry of the Merchant Marine, to be in these parts. But the short business trips, which were more akin to ceremonial outings, offered little in the way of an understanding of Murmansk's specific character. Perhaps that explains why I became so excited when my superiors said: "Go and take charge of the Murmansk Marine Steamship Line."