



“How I Spent My Summer Vacation”

OE Watch Commentary: As the Northern Sea route becomes more navigable, the need for icebreakers falls off during the summer months. Summer is traditionally the time for icebreaker maintenance and crew leave, though some consider it a shame to have the fleet idle when it could be earning some cash and spreading good will. As many as 600 well-heeled tourists will have the opportunity to crunch their way to the North Pole this summer on the most-powerful icebreaker ever built. Arctic and Antarctic cruises are becoming more popular and Russia has been providing icebreaker cruises to the North Pole since 1991. This 14-day cruise even offers an optional hot-air balloon ride over the North Pole. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“Russia’s fleet of nuclear-powered icebreakers is state-owned and operated by Rosatomflot in Murmansk.”

Source: Thomas Nilsen, “Five nuclear-powered voyages to melting North Pole,” *The Independent Barents Sea Observer*, 18 April 2018. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/travel/2018/04/five-nuclear-powered-voyages-north-pole>

50 Лем Победы [50 Years of Victory] - the most powerful icebreaker ever built will serve as a cruise-ship for some of the best-paying travelers this summer. Embarking in Murmansk, the nuclear-powered giant sails towards the North Pole five times during June to August. Each tour takes 120 passengers....

The sea ice is currently melting away at record speed. Arctic sea ice gets thinner and younger, making it move faster and breaking up more easily.... Russia’s fleet of nuclear-powered icebreakers is state-owned and operated by Rosatomflot in Murmansk. Director of the fleet, Vyacheslav Ruksha, says bringing tourists to the North Pole in the summer season isn’t among the most profitable voyages that the icebreakers make. “Such tours are far from being of a main economic interest. We are interested in this as a school, a kind of free advertising of our work.”

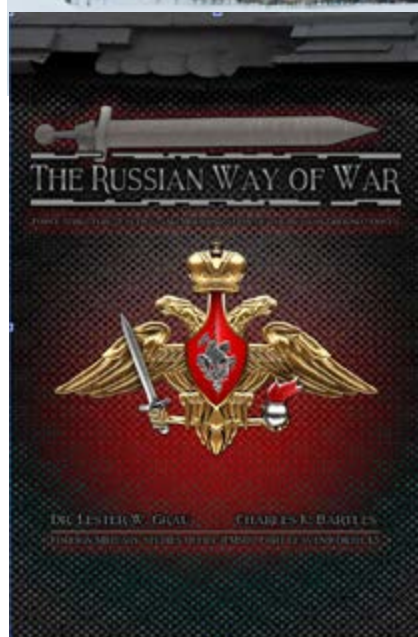
The icebreakers are normally opening the way for vessels sailing along the Northern Sea Route, from the Kara Sea to the eastern northern shores of Siberia. In summer, however, most icebreakers are in port at Murmansk for maintenance.

The first North Pole tourist cruise was arranged in 1991. The first time a Soviet icebreaker reached the geographical North Pole was in 1977 when Apmuka [Arctic] became the first surface vessel to make it all the way to the top. Last year, in a 40th Anniversary trip, an icebreaker sailed the same route as Apmuka did. That voyage managed to set a new record for the route, sailing from Murmansk to the North Pole in just 79 hours, less than half the time it took in 1977....

Tickets for passage and a berth onboard the North Pole Cruises starts at \$27,295 and you share a cabin. The spacious Arktika suite, on the top deck of the icebreaker, runs \$42,990 per person.

Russian nuclear icebreaker “50 Years of Victory”.

Source: By Kiselev d [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:50letPob_pole.JPG.



THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR by LESTER W. GRAU and CHARLES K. BARTLES

At any given time, assessments of the Russian Armed Forces vary between the idea of an incompetent and corrupt conscript army manning decrepit Soviet equipment and relying solely on brute force, to the idea of an elite military filled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) who were the “polite people” or “little green men” seen on the streets in Crimea. This book will attempt to split the difference between these radically different ideas by shedding some light on what the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

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