

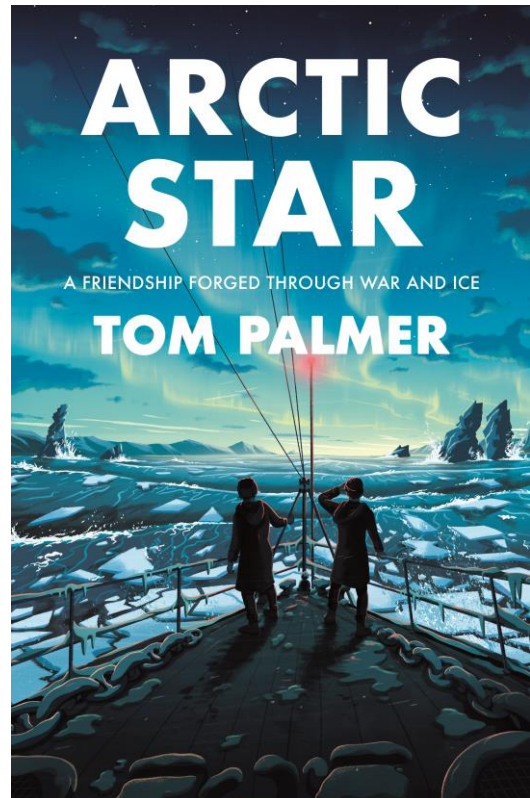
Acquisition release: For immediate release

## Children's Book Award winner Tom Palmer remembers little-known Arctic convoys of the Second World War, referred to by Churchill as "the worst journey in the world"

World rights to Tom Palmer's *Arctic Star* were acquired by Barrington Stoke Editorial Director Ailsa Bathgate from David Luxton at David Luxton Associates.

A compelling naval adventure inspired by the incredible history of the Second World War Arctic convoys, this children's novel from multi-award-winning Tom Palmer is his first historical tale since being crowned the 2020 FCBG Children's Book Award winner for *D-Day Dog*.

Winter 1943. Teenagers Francis, Joseph and Stephen are Royal Navy recruits on their first mission at sea during the Second World War. Their ship is part of an Arctic convoy sailing to Russia to deliver supplies to the Soviets. The convoys have to navigate treacherous waters, sailing through a narrow channel between the Arctic ice pack and German bases on the Norwegian coast. Faced with terrifying enemy attacks from both air and sea, as well as life-threatening cold, gales and pack ice, will all three boys make it home again?



Cover art: Tom Clohosy Cole

Editorial Director Ailsa Bathgate says of the acquisition:

*"Tom Palmer excels at bringing light to often overlooked but important and fascinating aspects of the First and Second World Wars, and in **Arctic Star** he turns his spotlight on the Arctic convoys. This vital part of the Allied war effort resulted in the supply of over four million tons of provisions and munitions to the Soviet Union after they were invaded by the Nazis in 1941.*

*"Tom brings to life the harrowing and often terrifying experiences of the Allied sailors' through the story of three childhood friends serving together on one of the convoys. In this action-packed but incredibly moving novel, we can feel all too clearly the dread of U-boat attacks from below and Stuka bombers from the sky, and we can begin to appreciate how horrendous the conditions were that they had to endure in the Arctic seas in winter. It is a gripping story of adventure, peril and devastating loss that will have readers on the edge of their seats."*

*Acquisition release: For immediate release*

Rooted in the real-life story of the Arctic convoys, **Arctic Star** was researched with the support of HMS *Belfast* and the Imperial War Museum. The title refers to the Arctic Star medal that was awarded to British and Commonwealth forces who served on these ships north of the Arctic Circle during the Second World War, in recognition of the reality that service on the Arctic convoys was entirely different from other tours and was characterised by particularly severe conditions, described by Winston Churchill as "the worst journey in the world".

Tom Palmer says:

*"Having written books about the Army and RAF, I was keen to write a naval novel. I've collaborated with the Imperial War Museum for a few years now and by accessing their amazing resources I have done my best to tell the story of the Arctic convoys. I have listened to hours of interviews with sailors, watched films and studied photographs and art from the convoys, as well as visiting HMS Belfast on which the book is set. I have never researched anything more terrifying that servicemen and women have been involved in – and I've researched a lot. Anyone who earned the Arctic Star medal has my absolute respect."*

This novel follows the successful publication of *Armistice Runner*, *D-Day Dog* and *After the War*, which have sold a combined 55,000. The new novel comes on the heels of a remarkable period for Tom which has seen *After the War* being nominated for the 2021 Carnegie Medal and *D-Day Dog* being crowned the overall winner of the FCBG Children's Book Award 2020.

**Arctic Star** will publish on 6 May 2021, with a cover by Tom Clohosy Cole for a stand-out package and commercial appeal across Tom's World War fiction back catalogue. Tom will be doing a tour of schools and libraries in navy towns and cities throughout publication month, including stops in Plymouth and Portsmouth.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Tom Palmer was a reluctant reader as a child and credits articles about football with getting him into reading. He went on to become a bookseller and then worked in reader development. He is now the multi-award-winning author of several books for young readers, including the acclaimed reboot of the *Roy of the Rovers* series and the FCBG Children's Book Award winners *Armistice Runner* and *D-Day Dog*, the latter of which was crowned the 2020 overall winner as well as category winner. In 2019 Tom was awarded the National Literacy Trust's Ruth Rendell Award in recognition of his significant contribution to literacy work in the UK. He lives in Halifax.

Twitter: @tompalmerauthor | [www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk)

## **ABOUT THE PUBLISHER**

Barrington Stoke has over 21 years' award-winning experience of publishing super-readable books accessible to young people with dyslexia or reading reluctance.

Twitter: @barringtonstoke | [www.barringtonstoke.co.uk](http://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk)

For further details or to register interest in a review copy, please contact Kirstin Lamb on [kirstin.lamb@barringtonstoke.co.uk](mailto:kirstin.lamb@barringtonstoke.co.uk) or 0131 225 4113

*Acquisition release: For immediate release*

**PRAISE FOR *ARMISTICE RUNNER*, *D-DAY DOG* AND *AFTER THE WAR***

"the best children's fiction book I've yet read about the Holocaust" TIM ROBERTSON, CEO OF THE ANNE FRANK TRUST UK ON *AFTER THE WAR*

"this is a beautiful, sensitive tale of friendship, courage and belonging ... written with a grace and simplicity that makes the story of these brave survivors even more powerful"  
LANCASHIRE EVENING PRESS ON *AFTER THE WAR*

"a touching, concisely told yet never dumbed-down, story of childhood during wartime. If you are new to his books, then prepare to be astounded. Tom Palmer has a rare talent for making the truth of the past accessible to children without watering down the horrific facts or emotional impact ... The WWII genre is a crowded market, but *After the War* elbows its way to the front as a stunning reflection on the impact of war, perfectly pitched for an upper KS2 audience." BOOKS FOR TOPICS

"A brilliant thought-provoking book, packed with issues that children can relate to: friendship, family, loss. Wrap that cleverly in a story of sport and war, and *Armistice Runner* is, without doubt, one of the finest war books I have read in a long time" READING ZONE

"World War One remains a subject of fascination for readers of all ages, but Tom Palmer finds an original way in to the topic in this poignant new story ... Today and yesterday are seamlessly woven together in a story that will move readers in lots of different ways" ANDREA REECE, LOVEREADING4KIDS, ON *ARMISTICE RUNNER*

"Powerfully poignant ... not to be missed. If there is one WWI story you read this year, let it be this one!" SCOTT EVANS, THE READER TEACHER, ON *ARMISTICE RUNNER*

"Another very emotional read from Tom Palmer and Barrington Stoke – they're the perfect pairing" PHIL EARLE ON *D-DAY DOG*

"A beautiful, engaging story focusing on the courage of soldiers now as well as in the past, the age-old bonds between humans and dogs, and the loving ties of family and friendship"  
LANCASHIRE EVENING POST ON *D-DAY DOG*

"Fantastic writing with a wide-ranging narrative, this story will prompt all who read it to think differently about conflict" NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST ON *D-DAY DOG*

"Tom Palmer sensitively yet unflinchingly discusses the consequences and emotions involved in warfare. Brilliantly researched, the book is full of fascinating facts which are woven together to create a truly moving and gripping read" BOOKS FOR TOPICS ON *D-DAY DOG*