

## ZEMLYA SANNIKOVA/ ЗЕМЛЯ САННИКОВА

BY JASON MORNINGSTAR

### WITNESS

*Baron Eduard Vasilyevich von Toll*, expedition leader, member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, geologist and explorer. His mission is to find and claim the northernmost and most elusive polar island, Zemlya Sannikova. He saw it with his own eyes in 1886 but was forced back by weather. His strength is his *persistence*, and his personality trait is *proud*.

### OTHER CHARACTERS:

- ⊙ *Nicholai Dyakonov*, a Sakha guide experienced in travel in the subarctic but totally unprepared for polar ice. Relied on as a “local expert” nonetheless.
- ⊙ *Dr. Viktor Katin-Yartsev*, Expedition Physician and political exile. An unrepentant Socialist, but a fun one to be around. Has good teeth and a fine moustache.
- ⊙ *Pyotr Strizhev*, Able Seaman and dog handler. Loves his huskies more than his shipmates. Often sleeps in the kennel tormented by violent nightmares.
- ⊙ *Lieutenant Fedor Andreyevich Mathison*, First Officer, surveyor, mineralogist, geologist and photographer. Mathison is cheerfully efficient, occasionally severe, and privately very worried.

### LOCATION AND ERA

It is 1902. The Imperial Russian Polar Expedition’s steam and sail-powered brig *Zarya* is locked fast in the ice during its second winter. Food and coal are running out and the *Zarya* is being crushed to matchsticks.

*Mortarless construction using giant (5' x 8' x 5') blocks strikes me as quite a feat. But I am no engineer. If only Pabodie was with us.*

**OTHER LOCATIONS:**

- ⊙ *The wardroom* of the *Zarya* is cramped, humid, and tilted five degrees to starboard. The 26 man crew congregates here around a roaring stove to smoke, play checkers, and argue.
- ⊙ *The orlop deck* of the *Zarya* is frigid, stinking, dark, and tilted five degrees to starboard. Once crammed with the expedition's supplies, it is now ominously empty.
- ⊙ *The ice* is a living thing - groaning, shifting and hungry. South - a vast open-water polynya between *Zarya* and the continent. East and west - enormous stacked ridges of pressure ice interspersed with treacherous open leads. North - Ostrov Bennetta.
- ⊙ *Ostrov Bennetta* is only five kilometers away, visible on a clear day. Beyond that is the tiny Ostrov Zhanetty and beyond *that*, somewhere, is Zemlya Sannikova. Bennetta is a proper island with steep cliffs, glaciers, lichen and no animals other than migratory birds.

**SPECIAL CARDS**

- ⊙ Victims
- ⊙ Replace the *Witness*
- ⊙ Specimen
- ⊙ Strange Location
- ⊙ Flashback

**NOTE**

Sannikov Land does not exist, but it appeared on Soviet maps until the 1930s.

A great resource:

<http://pubs.aina.ucalgary.ca/arctic/Arctic34-3-201.pdf>

**SOME EXPEDITION MEMBERS**

- ⊙ Lieutenant Commander Nikolai Kolomeytsev (Captain of the *Zarya*, reclusive drunk)
- ⊙ Lieutenant Aleksandr V. Kolchak (Second Officer, Oceanographer, future warlord)
- ⊙ A. A. Byalynitsky Birulya (Zoologist)
- ⊙ F.G. Seeberg (Astronomer)
- ⊙ O. Tsionglinskogo (Scientific assistant; political exile)
- ⊙ Thomas Yaskevich (Cook)
- ⊙ Vasily Gorokhov (Sakha guide)
- ⊙ Edward Ogryns (Chief engineer)
- ⊙ M. I. Brusnov (Engineer; political exile)
- ⊙ Gabriel Puzyrev (Fireman)
- ⊙ N. A. Begichev (Boatswain)
- ⊙ Simon Evstifeev (Seaman)

**ZEMLYA SANNIKOVA: SAMPLE CLUES**

- ⊙ A figure on the ice where no figure should or even could be.
- ⊙ A heavy chest kept under lock and key in Captain Kolomeytsev's cabin.
- ⊙ The expedition journal entry for the day certain crewmen put ashore on the Fadeyevsky Peninsula, ripped out and missing.
- ⊙ A chunk of Devonian limestone with something unwholesome embedded in it.
- ⊙ The crew divides into paranoid factions, seemingly overnight.
- ⊙ Someone has been leaving the Zarya, alone and at night.
- ⊙ Flashes of light beyond the northern horizon.
- ⊙ Magnetic observations, made in a crabbed hand, that make no sense.
- ⊙ Unexplained injuries among the sailors.
- ⊙ The corpse of a woolly mammoth, torn apart and scattered across the ice amid smears of arterial blood.
- ⊙ Something terrible bobbing in open water.
- ⊙ Expedition food supplies, subtly tampered with.
- ⊙ Objects taken from an old cache on Kotelny Island left by Sannikov's 1811 expedition.
- ⊙ A crumbling cliff face vomiting forth stunningly well-preserved trees, bones, and ivory tusks from the Pleistocene or earlier.

*Unable to get a clear look  
at bas-reliefs. With luck  
we will find more.*