

We are broadcasting tonight from H.M.C.S. “STADACONA” – the ship that never goes to sea but houses sea-going men who man the ships at one of the world’s greatest naval bases, Halifax – in Canada’s only actual operational war zone, the zone which turns the wheels of victory in the Battle of the North Atlantic.

Here in this jam-packed port is found the Royal Canadian Navy’s throbbing nerve centre, controlled by one of Canada’s most able and sea-minded navy men – Rear Admiral L.W. Murray, R.C.N., Commander-in-Chief, Canadian Northwest Atlantic, upon whose shoulders rests the responsibility of clearing the Northwest Atlantic sea lanes of enemy U-boats, handling half of the whole North Atlantic convoy job – the United Nations’ most important lifeline.

As Commander-in-Chief, Rear Admiral Murray is in command of an operational war front in which the enemy is being actively and constantly engaged. To this port often come the casualties of battle, ships torpedoed but still afloat, thankful men in Red Cross survivors’ kits, and prisoners of war.

Under the Commander-in-Chief and his staff of highly trained anti-submarine tacticians, the convoys move steadily from bases along this eastern Canadian seaboard – bases of which Halifax is typical. Great new barracks and dockyards have sprung up almost overnight to accommodate and train the ever-increasing personnel of the navy. Near here is Canada’s huge new training establishment. H.M.C.S. “CORNWALLIS” – the largest of its kind in the British Empire. From the windows of this room we can see the flicker of welders’ torches in great ship repair depots, typical of many others that heal the wounds of our marine casualties along this coast.

Now totalling some 65,000 men and close to 600 ships, the Royal Canadian Navy has made a name for itself as a convoy escort navy and a U-boat combatant, and the destroyers, minesweepers and tough-riding, sturdy little corvettes have done a job of which the whole world is proud. In the critical months after Pearl Harbour, Canada provided 47 per cent of all the North Atlantic convoy protection.

Off this port last spring, Germany sowed an arc of high-explosive mines in recognition of its importance. Canada's minesweeping fleet accepted the challenge, worked tirelessly day and night until they announced the danger area completely under control – without loss of life or convoyed shipping.

That is the kind of show Canadian sailors are proud of. They are proud too of the rapidly-growing, powerful and death-dealing outfit their navy has turned into. They are proud that their navy is manned by Canadians from every part of the country, men who left quiet, peace-time jobs and homes to be whipped into sea-going fighting efficiency with amazing rapidity since the war began – for Canada, in 1939.

Here in this war-time, boom town of Halifax, history is being made. Here the ships come and go. Here the wives and sweethearts of sea-going men wait for them to return. It is the nerve-centre of a vast war machine, a crossroads of trade. It is a city of romance, a rendezvous of sailors, merchant and navy, of all the Allied nations. It is a city housing the men who fight the U-boats and clear the convoy routes through perilous, submarine-infested sea lanes.

At this historic naval bastion the Canadian stars come ashore and get together after long and tiring runs to spin their yarns on running fights with enemy raiders. They chat about attacks by and on enemy U-boats. Their records are packed with tales of heroism, of death-daring achievements. Many times death has taken the upper hand, but as naval veterans know, "A navy isn't a navy until it has suffered the loss of ships."

Wherever the war is found will be found the men of the Royal Canadian Navy, toughened from bitter service in the harsh waters of the North Atlantic. They range abroad, too, to the Mediterranean Sea, Dieppe, North Africa, Sicily, and a hundred of unnamed ports around the world. But until the war is won, Hitler's U-boats in the North Atlantic will know this is the home stomping ground of an anti-submarine fleet, the Royal Canadian Navy.