

M.L. Command Story

Halifax

Dec '43

Healy

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**OTTAWA** - The Royal Canadian Navy's fleet of sleek, speedy, sub-chasing motor launches, guarding the waters of Canada's eastern coast, have been operating for the past seven months under their own command, directed by Capt. J.A. Heenan, R.C.N.R., of Ottawa, naval officials announced today.

Following a naval announcement that the R.C.N. has had two base ships, commonly known as "Mother" ships, in service for more than a year, today's announcement was not released earlier because of security surrounding the type of work and disposition of the M.L. fleet.

In assuming control of the fleet, Capt. Heenan also was made commanding officer of H.M.C.S. "Venture", a converted yacht, turned over to the navy at the outbreak of war and used now as the M.L. Base Ship – the nerve centre of the fleet. He is surrounded by a staff of veteran M.L. men who maintain the boat's fighting efficiency and are responsible to the Commander-in-Chief, Canadian Northwest Atlantic, Rear Admiral L.W. Murray, C.B.E., R.C.N., for their operation. Capt Heenan's right-hand men are Lieut. Cdr. R.M. Powell, R.C.N.V.R., of Ottawa, his staff officer, and Lieut. Cdr. Thomas Denny, R.C.N.V.R., of Victoria.

Since the start of the war, officials said, the motor launch flotilla has been guarding the vital sea lanes of the North Atlantic and since coming under their own command have increased their efficiency a hundred fold.

Travelling in flotillas of six, they have seen service from the most northern tip of Labrador to Key West, Fla. and Bermuda's sunny south. And they played an important role along with the minesweepers when Germany mined the mouth of Halifax Harbour. They are constantly dashing to the aid of distressed merchant ships, and the survivors they have snatched from the seas number in the hundreds.

Only recently the Royal Navy called on Canada for Canadian naval personnel – men trained in small craft anti-submarine warfare – to man the first Canadian Motor Gun Boat Flotilla overseas. In a matter of weeks more than the

required number had volunteered and are now in Britain. The move was seen by officials as more evidence of the esteem held for the men of the M.L. fleet.

It will not be until after the war, however, that the complete story played by the famed little sub-chasers will fully be told.