

Minesweeping Feature

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(general release)

Lawrence & Healy

An eastern Canadian port – The Royal Canadian Navy's latest achievement of the war – frustration of Germany's attempt to bottle up Halifax Harbor by sowing high-explosive minefields – was praised today by Lieut. Cdr. R.M. Barkhouse, R.C.N.R., Halifax Port Minesweeping Officer.

Announcement of the enemy's unsuccessful minelaying offensive off Canada's eastern coast was announced earlier by Navy Minister MacDonald.

The man immediately responsible for the safety of ships and the elimination of the German mine threat to shipping, Lieut. Cdr. Barkhouse told interviewers "we knew exactly what we were going to do – we had made our preparations for this long in advance.

"I must say we were lucky – very lucky – for the best plans in the world can go astray," he continued. "But we had three problems: first, to clear a channel for convoys; second, to determine the extent of the minefield by exploratory sweeps; and third, to mop up the mines. Our men did all three.

"I'd like to say a word about the officers and men. From seaman to C.O. they were wonderful. For two weeks they kept going at 20 hours a day, and there wasn't a single defaulter. The more they swept the more they wanted to, and I didn't hear a single grumble."

A veteran minesweeper, Lieut. Cdr. Barkhouse himself went to sea during the first three sleepless days and personally directed the operations of his fleet. In the last war, he sailed the first Canadian drifter sweeper to Gibraltar and put her to work.