

(general release)

H.M.C.S. "CORNWALLIS", N.S. – The first class of young Canadian Officer Candidates – men who soon will be fighting the Battle of the North Atlantic as sub-lieutenants in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve – recently graduated from this base – the newest and largest naval training centre in the British Empire.

Hailing from all parts of Canada, they are men who joined the navy as ordinary seamen and because of special educational and other qualifications were selected as possible officer material to be commissioned at the end of their ordinary seamen training, providing they qualified and showed the necessary ability required of an officer.

The class was the first result of the navy's recently announced scheme to bring all executive branch officers through the lower deck. Previously executive officers could join the navy as probationary sub-lieutenants and start right in on an officers' training course.

Now home on leave after strenuous months of training in barracks and at sea, the following were among the graduates:

Ordinary Seaman Graham Goodall, R.C.N.V.R.; Henry Belgrave, R.C.N.V.R.; David Goad, R.C.N.V.R.; Stewart MacLaurin, R.C.N.V.R.; Herbert Montgomery, R.C.N.V.R.; David Ramsay, R.C.N.V.R.; John Poirier, R.C.N.V.R.; and Earnest Mount, R.C.N.V.R.; – all of Montreal; O/Smn. Ross McIlhargey, R.C.N.V.R., Wetaskiwin, Alta.; Richard Edwards, R.C.N.V.R., Edmonton; James Brownlee, R.C.N.V.R., and Edmund Kurtz, R.C.N.V.R., both of Regina; Donald Bowman, R.C.N.V.R., all of Saskatoon; Ewart Puffer, R.C.N.V.R., Rosetown and Regina; Mike Brennan, R.C.N.V.R., Plato, Sask.; Alex Talbot, R.C.N.V.R., Prince Albert, Sask.; and James McRae, Wilkie, Sask.

Graduation day was the culmination of many months hard work and study with an Officers' Selection Board informing each of them separately whether or not they had qualified and would be granted a commission.

“It was some strain waiting for the final decision,” said O/Smn, McIlhargey of Wetaskiwin, “and I sure felt good when I learned I had passed.”

“We were on pins and needles,” said O/Smn. Goodall of Montreal, “and sure relieved when we were told.”

And to O/Smn. Talbot of Prince Albert, it was “the greatest news I’ve ever received. You suddenly realize all that hard plugging was more than worth it. And now three weeks leave – oh boy!”

Under the navy’s new regulations to pass executive officers through the lower deck, any man is eligible to be chosen as an officer candidate when he joins the navy. If a man has a better than average education or shows ability of leadership and intelligence, his superior officer can recommend him to appear before an officers’ selection board and be earmarked to take an officers’ training course on completion of his lower deck training. On completion of their 10 weeks course with an added six weeks at sea, they then appear before a second board and a final decision is made.

If they qualify, they are given leave and report back in officer’s uniform to undergo more extensive training.