

## **Royal Canadian Navy Press Release**

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If you're not a mother, wife, sweetheart, relative or friend of a Royal Canadian Navy man, this isn't for you.

But if you are, make it a "must" before going on that pre-Christmas shopping spree.

As in civilian life, Santa Claus can be good or bad to a Navy man. But when he's bad to a sea-going sailor, brother – he's really bad.

Did you ever wonder what it would be like to climb out of bed Christmas morning and instead of being faced with a cheery Christmas tree and a cozy-stockinged mantelpiece, you hit the icy deck of a storm-swept corvette or minesweeper? Quite a difference!

But add to that a lot of nonsensical and useless Christmas gifts from loved ones, and you know just how low a sailor's morale can dip.

Here are some helpful hints to make your navy man the happiest fellow aboard ship or the happiest man in barracks.

First of all, know the man's category. Know if he is an officer or a rating, and if a rating, know what uniform he wears. Unlike the other services, there are two types of navy uniforms. There's the "Fore and Aft" uniform, and the traditional sailor suit type. If you know which he wears, you'll have a better idea what kind of gift to get him.

For instance, a white broadcloth shirt, hard collars or black tie are perfect gifts for a "Fore and Aft" man, confirmed petty officers, writers, supply assistants, sick berth attendants, cooks – but are absolutely useless to a man dressed as a seaman. And you can imagine the chagrin of a "Fore and Aft" man or officer at receiving a nice white "dicky" front for a sailor suit. In other words, when you choose your gift, make sure it is something that he can use and will please him – not something to trade with someone else.

Men serving at sea aren't at a loss for cigarettes or tobacco. In fact, they can get them a lot cheaper than you can. But that doesn't apply to men ashore. Both

can use lighters, tobacco pouches, and anyone would give an eye tooth for a monogrammed cigarette case.

Toilet articles come fairly plentiful to men on the ships and their Navy League ditty bags generally add to their supply. But a smart, waterproof kit is welcome as a container to store their collections of toiletries. Shore men serving in this jam-packed port, on the other hand, will welcome all kinds of toilet goods, especially razor blades, because they're hard to get.

Don't worry about books for the sea-going man, but all kinds of reading material will be received warmly ashore. Money wallets or money belts are cherished by all.

The Red Cross and Navy League take pretty good care to see that our seamen keep warm during the icy winter months, so don't worry too much about warmish woolen scarves, gloves or balaclavas. But you can't give him too much underwear. Constant changes are necessary when men become soaked to the skin by salty sprays. And patch jackets are the pride of every man. Dress socks and dress leather gloves (black) are a nice thing to wear ashore. And bedroom slippers are a luxury at sea. So are comb and brush sets.

A gift that will be cherished by every man, ashore or afloat, is an identification bracelet. But here more knowledge is needed. Is he R.C.N., R.C.N.R., or R.C.N.V.R.? That's important, because each man is proud of the branch he's in and an R.C.N. man would resent an R.C.N.V.R. emblem on his bracelet and vice versa. Just as welcome is a navy signet ring – and the same rules apply. Of course you should find out if he has one of these already.

But the dream of every navy man – especially those at sea – is a waterproof wristwatch. A little steep, maybe, but one of the finest gifts you could give a man. He'll bless you every time he looks at the time.

At sea you seldom get a chance to enjoy the luxury and comfort of warm, soft, flannel pyjamas. But when you do get a chance, it's a little bit of heaven. Pyjamas are definitely on the "A" list.

If you're one of those lucky persons who seem to have a certain knack of obtaining the impossible, be sure and get hold of a flashlight and batteries. You can rest assured they will be welcomed heartily by any seaman.

Is your man a swing fan or jive hound? If so, he'll welcome nothing better than a few phonograph records – providing they get to him in one piece. That's important. Many a swingster has felt the pangs of a broken heart over a broken record. Most ships are equipped with up-to-date phonographs donated by generous

citizens throughout the country, and music does more to keep up morale at sea than anything else.

Another gift which will be welcomed by everyone – but it's pretty hard to get – is a portable radio or mantle radio, not a big one but the type a fellow can chuck at the head of his bunk.

Most men in the navy love to write letters – especially when they're at sea. Don't hesitate to get him a pen and pencil set or monogrammed writing paper. He'll go for them in a big way.

And last, but certainly not least, there's nothing a man likes better than homemade food. The ship's food may be okay and he may love the cook, but nobody's cookies, candy or jam ever tasted quite like mother's.

If you want to wish the navy a Merry Christmas, just abide by these suggestions. They're guaranteed to result in U-boat sinkings.