

fast convoys and Sydney for slow ones—and from which they could be escorted to an agreed West Ocean Meeting Point south of Newfoundland where they would be handed over to a Mid-Ocean escort group based on St. John's and shepherded to a Mid-Ocean Meeting Point east and south of Iceland, there to be escorted to British harbours by ships based on Iceland or Britain, and under air cover. Escort ships would refuel for the return voyage at Londonderry or Iceland, or at St. John's or Halifax as appropriate.

The RCN at once offered to assume responsibility for the Mid-Ocean segment, provided ships then serving with the Royal Navy were returned, and agreed to add corvettes as soon as available. The Admiralty promptly accepted and the RCN began its expanded operations.<sup>40</sup>

The project of a base at St. John's raised political and financial, as well as strategic, considerations. Newfoundland clearly could not finance construction of a base. The United Kingdom could but was short of dollars. Canada could but, with the Canadian taxpayer in mind, the Government felt that Canada should have title or at least long-term occupancy in return for meeting the bill.

An arrangement was eventually agreed to whereby Canada would construct the base for the Admiralty which would be ultimately responsible for capital costs and which would have title to the base. Since the base would be used mainly by Canadian escort forces, Canada would be responsible for its operation and maintenance. The question of post-war use remained to be settled after the war, except that Canada would be consulted if it was proposed at any time to relinquish title or control of the base and shore facilities.

At Bay Bulls, about twenty miles south of St. John's, Canada also constructed a subsidiary repair base which proved highly useful for effecting "running repairs"<sup>41</sup> of the escort ships and occasionally of merchant ships.

The Newfoundland Government made a substantial contribution to the construction of this base and agreed to a 99-year lease to Canada. In the end, this was not taken up by Canada in view of the surplus ship-repair facilities available after the war;<sup>42</sup> nor did the Newfoundland Government want the base to compete with commercial ship-repair facilities at that time.

When the new scheme for escorting convoys became fully operational, the United Kingdom furnished about fifty percent of the protection for North Atlantic trade convoys, Canada forty-eight percent, and the United States two percent. The United States was also responsible for fast freight and troop convoys after it entered the war, but it was soon heavily engaged in the Pacific, as well as along its Atlantic coast, and it withdrew most of its destroyers from Atlantic convoy duty.

The RCN also participated in convoy escort duty in the Mediterranean, in the Caribbean and along the Atlantic coast of the United States. Canadian

<sup>40</sup> Stacey, C. P. *op. cit.* p. 310-314 and Chapter I, part 4, Section b.

<sup>41</sup> Tucker, G. N. T. *op. cit.* p. 198-199 and Chapter I, Part 4, Section b.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter I, Part 4, Section b.