

## BIGGEST CONVOY RECALLED

Sixteen years ago August 3, the largest trade convoy ever to sail the Atlantic Ocean arrived safely at its destination. The same day the convoy's close-escort, composed of the Canadian frigate "Dunver" and corvettes "Hes-peler", "Dauphin", "New Westminster", "Wetas-kiwin", "Algoma" and "Longbranch", lay at Londonderry, Northern Ireland, refuelling and taking on provisions. They had just completed what to them was a routine wartime escort job.

The delivery of convoy HXS-300 and its 1,019,829 tons of cargo was not a story of flaming guns and exploding depth charges and torpedoes, but rather one of quiet efficiency and teamwork.

HXS-300 started from New York on July 17, 1944, when 109 ships were escorted to the first ocean meeting-place by four Royal Canadian Navy and two U.S. Navy escort ships. There, 31 merchant ships from Halifax joined in a heavy fog.

### CONVOY RENDEZVOUS

They were still enveloped in fog the following day when 24 ships from Sydney, Nova Scotia, joined. Next came three ships from St. John's, Newfoundland. Two days later, at the Western Ocean Meeting Place (WESTOMP), the ocean escort force, consisting of HMCS "Dunver" and the six corvettes, took over from the local escort force.

The full-grown convoy was deployed in 19 columns covering more than 30 square miles of ocean.

When HXS-300 reached the eastern tip of Newfoundland it had been fog-bound for 800 miles. It was to face another 300 miles of fog-shrouded waters, with the additional hazard of icebergs and U-Boats.

On July 26 the convoy emerged from the fog. In clear weather the ships began to exercise emergency turns. The preparations were timely, for the next day an aircraft from one of the convoy's four merchant aircraft-carriers sighted a submarine about 50 miles to the north.

The convoy lumbered on its ponderous way in worsening weather. In the holds of the merchant ships lay the vital cargoes bound for Iceland, North Russia, Loch Ewe, Oban, Belfast, Liverpool and Bristol. On July 28, in conditions of squally weather and poor visibility, the escort began re-organizing the huge convoy to facilitate the splitting for their final destination.

### SAFE CONCLUSION

Early the next day, 28 ships, of which nine were Russia-bound, detached themselves from the main convoy. On July 30, 14 fast ships left, and still later the final re-grouping took place. On August 3, 1944, safely in port, the merchant ships began to discharge their cargoes while the escorts refuelled and provi-

sioned at Londonderry awaiting orders for convoy back across the Atlantic.

More than a million tons of cargo were carried in the 167-ship convoy. Before the war ended the RCN had safely escorted 25,000 ships, carrying 181 million tons of cargo.

From a force of six men-of-war in September, 1939, the Royal Canadian Navy grew to a formidable array of almost 400 fighting ships ranging from cruisers to destroyers, frigates, corvettes and smaller patrol craft. In mid-summer of 1944, the RCN was responsible for the close escort of all convoys sailing the North Atlantic. The safe delivery of convoy HXS-300 epitomized Canada's naval achievement.

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## JUNE SEA FISHERIES

The catch of sea fish and shellfish in June declined to 223,427,000 pounds from 232,393,000 in the same month last year, placing the January-June total at 588,521,000 pounds, against 620,797,000 a year ago, a decrease of 5.2 per cent, according to advance DBS figures. Landed value dropped in the month to \$11,572,000 from \$14,365,000 and in the six months to \$33,500,000 from \$35,505,000.

Landings on the Atlantic coast fell in June to 207,367,000 pounds from 208,891,000 a year earlier and rose in the January-June period to 502,083,000 pounds from 452,609,000. The monthly landed value declined to \$8,929,000 from \$10,764,000 and the half-year value edged up to \$26,807,000 from \$26,023,000.

The catch on the British Columbia coast decreased sharply in June to 16,060,000 pounds from 23,502,000 a year earlier and in the six-month period to 86,438,000 pounds from 168,188,000. The monthly landed value dropped to \$2,643,000 from \$3,601,000 and the half-year total to \$6,693,000 from \$9,482,000.

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## MAY LABOUR INCOME

Canada's paid workers received an estimated \$1,526 million in May in the form of salaries and wages and supplementary labour income, according to advance figures from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This was 2.6 per cent greater than the April total of \$1,487 million and 3.0 per cent larger than last year's May figure of \$1,482 million. Labour income rose 4.4 per cent in the January-May period to \$7,395 million from \$7,081 million in the corresponding period last year.

Labour income in May and the January-May period was above the levels of a year earlier in all regions. The monthly increases (five-month gains in brackets) were: Atlantic region, 5.2 per cent (5.9 per cent); Quebec, 3.7 per cent (5.1 per cent); Ontario, 2.2 per cent (3.8 per cent); Prairie region, 2.7 per cent (3.8 per cent); and British Columbia, 2.5 per cent (5.3 per cent).