

# REFERENCE PAPERS

## WARTIME INFORMATION BOARD, OTTAWA

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### CANADIAN MERCHANT SEAMEN

Since the outbreak of war, 994 Canadian merchant seamen have lost their lives by enemy action while serving on ships carrying war material to the fighting fronts of the world. Of these, 628 were serving on Canadian merchant vessels, 250 on United Kingdom ships, and 116 more died while serving on ships of other allied nations.

In addition, 145 merchant seamen are interned in enemy prison camps, and 37 have been repatriated in exchanges of prisoners.

Today Canadian merchant seamen are providing the crews for a fleet of merchant ships which has grown from 37 at the outbreak of war to nearly 150 ships in less than five years - a fleet which may total more than 300 at the end of the war.

In September, 1939, Canada had 14 fairly large shipyards and 15 smaller boat-building establishments and employed less than 4,000 men in the construction of merchant vessels. At the peak of its shipbuilding program, the summer of 1943, there were 25 major and 65 smaller yards in operation, with 75,000 men and women at work in them.

The cargo vessel program was entrusted to a crown company, Wartime Merchant Shipping Limited. In December, 1943, however, it was decided to merge the administration of the cargo boat program with that of the naval shipbuilding program. Wartime Merchant Shipping Limited was renamed Wartime Shipbuilding Limited, and supervision of combat ship construction was added to its cargo shipbuilding activities.

More than 400 cargo ships have been ordered, and 312 delivered. Those delivered include 235 10,000-tonners, 23 4,700-tonners and four 3,000-ton tankers.

The 10,000-ton cargo vessels are of four main types: North Sands, Victory, tankers and Canadian. All have a deadweight tonnage of 10,350 tons; length 441 feet; beam 57 feet; depth 37 feet; draught 27 feet; speed (loaded) 11 knots; triple expansion engines of 2,500 horsepower. They all need crews of 50 officers and men, exclusive of gunners.

It is estimated that a 10,000-ton cargo vessel, after loading with ship's stores and water, will carry on an average the following cargo:

2,850 tons of flour, cheese, bacon and ham to feed 25,000 persons for a week; 2,150 tons of steel; enough motorized equipment to outfit a full infantry battalion; 1,900 tons of bombs; sufficient lumber, plywood, wall-board and nails to build 29 four-room cottages or a row of dwellings nine blocks long; sufficient aluminum to build 310 bombers or 640 fighter planes; and two complete bombers stowed on the aft deck in knocked-down condition.

The 4,700-tonners have a length of 328 feet; beam 46½ feet; depth 25 feet; draught 20 feet; deadweight 4,700 long tons; triple expansion engines of 1,176 horsepower; speed (loaded) 10 knots.

Of the 312 ships delivered by Canadian shipyards, 10 10,000-tonners were sold to the United States Maritime Commission and two to the British Ministry of War Transport. In addition, the Canadian government has delivered 102 ships to the United Kingdom and one ship to Australia under Mutual Aid. These vessels are manned and operated by the United Kingdom and Australia for the duration, but are returnable to Canada at the end of the war.