

merchant ships carrying more than 1,000,000 tons of cargo, sailed from North American shores in the summer of 1944 and reached its destination without the loss of a single ship. The protection for this great armada was provided by escort vessels of the Canadian navy.

Even to assemble a convoy requires work and caution undreamed of by the layman. Ships have to be routed from various ports to arrive at the assembly point at a predetermined time. The provisioning and fuelling of ships must be planned so that the ships will sail on time.

Naval Control Staffs have been set up at Halifax, Sydney, Saint-John, Montreal, Quebec, Vancouver, Esquimalt and Prince Rupert, composed principally of Naval Reserve Officers who are familiar with merchant shipping. A system was instituted whereby every merchant ship sailing in convoy would be examined as to speed, manoeuvrability, fuel capacity and adequacy and loyalty of crew and officers. Shipmasters were instructed in a brief, but adequate course of signalling, interpretation of orders, and regulations concerning sailing in convoy.

In addition to serving in the ships of the Royal Canadian Navy in convoy, R.C.N. sailors serve in the merchant ships themselves, manning the heavier guns on board. The majority of smaller weapons, such as machine-guns and anti-aircraft guns are now manned by DEMS-trained (Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships) seamen. The merchant navy has been steadily increasing the amount of defensive equipment aboard its vessels, and merchant seamen are learning gunnery in a short course at five naval gunnery schools in Canada. The schools are operated by DEMS and are an integral part of the job the R.C.N. through its Trade Division is doing to help the safe convoy of goods.

Convoy groups are arranged according to maximum speed. Escort vessels have to be assigned. Planes are supplied by the R.C.A.F. to protect the flotilla on the first leg of the trip, and aircraft of the United States or United Kingdom operating from United Kingdom or the Azores protect it for the rest of the journey. All these and other details must be looked after for each convoy.

GUARDING CANADIAN SHORES

The R.C.N. is constantly on guard in Canadian coastal waters. The monotonous but vital work of submarine patrol is carried on in the St. Lawrence River itself.

The R.C.N. works closely with coastal reconnaissance squadrons of the R.C.A.F. in this important task. Every day minesweepers steam out from Canadian ports to go about their dangerous job.

Fisherman's Reserve

The west coast of Canada with its deep indentations and myriads of small islands presents a special problem for patrol. The mainland itself stretches 1,580 miles; the islands are another 3,980 miles -- total of 5,560 miles to watch over.

In the early months of 1939, a third reserve for the navy was formed, drawn from men in the west coast fishing industry. These men know intimately this long coastline of the Pacific. Their boats, which