

TWO DIVISION FLEET: A clear-cut division between operational and training ships is being undertaken in the Royal Canadian Navy. It was announced on February 16, at Naval Headquarters.

Operational ships and carrier-borne aircraft are being welded into a specialized anti-submarine force and are to be developed to the highest possible standard of efficiency.

Training ships will be employed exclusively in providing sea experience for new entries, Reserve personnel and Naval Cadets, and in furnishing the practical training necessary to supplement that received ashore by men taking courses in specialized subjects -- gunnery, communications, electricity, electronics, engineering, radar plotting, etc.

This dual program has been blue-printed for some time but a shortage of manpower and lack of trained personnel delayed its introduction. It is anticipated that the next few months will see these deficiencies sufficiently overcome to clear the way for what is considered to be the most important step taken by the Navy since the war.

FIRST MOVE LAST YEAR

The first move in this direction actually was made last year, when the cruiser H.M.C.S. "Ontario" was freed of all operational commitments and assigned strictly to training duties. However, there were no ships set aside for purely operational purposes, all of them being engaged, of necessity, in training activities at various times and in varying degrees.

The operational force, to begin with, will consist of the aircraft carrier "Magnificent" and destroyers "Micmac" and "Huron" on the East Coast, and the destroyers "Cayuga" and "Sioux" on the West Coast.

The crews of these ships will contain a high proportion of trained personnel and will not be subjected to large-scale changes at frequent intervals, as is the case in training craft. A certain number of untrained men will be absorbed into their ship's companies from time to time but only so many as not to affect their efficiency.

In this way it is hoped that efficiency and teamwork will be developed to a high degree initially in the ships themselves, then in the force as a whole.

Under arrangements which have been in effect for some time, British and United States submarines will be made available to the R.C.N. for practical training purposes. These submarines will be employed both in training anti-submarine personnel and in advanced exercises with ships and aircraft of the operational force.

RECORD RETAIL SALES: Canadians spent more money in retail stores last December than in any other month on record, expenditures running to a total of \$791,420,000, up three per cent over the previous monthly peak of \$770,450,000 in December, 1948. Sales were higher in all months of 1949, compared with 1948 and the aggregate for the 12 months also reached a new all-time high figure of \$7,695,340,000 as against \$7,276,720,000 in 1948, the rise amounting to six per cent.

Christmas buying, always an important influence on December sales, was as active in 1949 as in the preceding year. Apparel stores, customarily popular gift centres, did a flourishing Christmas trade, although sales fell slightly short of December, 1948. Merchants of durable goods ended the year with substantial December sales increases. Appliance and radio stores showed a gain of 23 per cent in sales, while furniture and jewellery stores marked up advances of seven per cent and six per cent, respectively. In most other trades, results for December were close to the average gain of three per cent in total retail trade.

Sales in the year 1949 exceeded 1948 dollar volume for 16 of the 20 individual trades covered in the Bureau's monthly survey. In the four cases where declines occurred -- country general stores, men's clothing stores, family clothing stores, and coal and wood dealers -- the reductions were small. Apart from an increase of 17 per cent for motor vehicle dealers and a 10 per cent gain for garages and filling stations, the increases shown by the majority of trades were of moderate proportions.

R. M. C. WEST POINT HOCKEY ANNUAL: The second postwar meeting between the hockey teams of Royal Military College and the United States Military Academy of West Point, N.Y., will take place at Kingston, Ont., on March 11.

The famous annual series was resumed last winter after a seven-year lapse brought about by the war. In last year's hard-fought match, played at West Point before a jammed arena, the USMA squad chalked up a 5 to 4 victory, their third successive win in the series. They had previously defeated RMC in the 1939 and 1942 games, the last to be played before 1949.

The series has often been described as one of the world's "most sporting" athletic events. Never once during the entire history of the series, since 1923, has a player been penalized. And this in spite of the fact that rivalry and hard play has been keen in every game, with no quarter asked and none given. It is a record believed to be unique in college athletics.