

Within several months two new medium cruisers of the most modern type will be given to Canada by the United Kingdom as "mutual aid in reverse". For considerable time Canadian naval officers and ratings have been in training with the Royal Navy for cruiser operation so they can man the cruisers when they are delivered.

In addition, two Royal Navy escort aircraft carriers will be manned by Canadian officers and seamen, although the aircraft and their operational crews probably will be provided by the United Kingdom. The carriers will remain Royal Navy ships, while the cruisers and destroyers will become units of the Canadian Navy.

The two carriers are expected to begin convoy escort duties in the Atlantic in a few months and later may go to the Pacific. Pacific naval facilities at Esquimalt and Prince Rupert, British Columbia, are being improved, and new machine shops are being established at Esquimalt.

During 1940 in exchange for land bases within the Empire, the British Commonwealth of Nations received from the U.S. fifty over-age destroyers. Canada's allotment of these was seven. These were a most valuable addition to Canada's naval strength.

In October 1939 the R.C.N. took over the destroyer Kempenfelt (for which the Canadian Government had been negotiating before the war started) from the R.N. as flotilla leader for the Canadian fleet. The ship was rechristened the Assiniboine.

Corvettes

Although Tribal class destroyers are being added as fast as they can be secured, the greatest strength of the Royal Canadian Navy lies in her corvettes.

The first corvette launched in Canada was not built to harry German submarines. It was a 500-ton ship contracted for by Neree Levasseur, a builder of ships for Louis XV of France, and launched at Quebec in 1739. A corvette was a sloop of war.

It ranked next below a frigate, was fast sailing and easy to handle. In these two respects it was like the corvettes of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Corvettes are small, built somewhat on the lines of the sailing ship, especially designed for escort and anti-submarine duties.

They have a "terrific roll" but they are extremely seaworthy and easy to manoeuvre. They will not break under the strain of wind and weather.

Canadian shipyards have turned these vessels out in large numbers. Three corvettes can be built in the time it takes to build a destroyer, and they can be built on the Great Lakes and taken down to the sea over the Great Lakes canal and river system, while destroyers cannot. Designing and building a corvette calls for great skill, because of the large quantity of equipment to be fitted into the small space of the ship. There are more than 70 corvettes in the Royal Canadian Navy, and many others have been built for the British Navy.

Specifications of the latest and best of this type of ship are a secret. Corvettes which were built during the earlier part of the war were 190 feet in length and included armament of a 4-inch gun, machine gun, and depth charges. The total cost was \$700,000.

Frigates

The frigate, a new type of warship between the corvette and the destroyer in size, is coming into use in the Canadian Navy. It is larger, has more speed and a greater range than the corvette, and has greater accommodation for the crew. It has about the same fire power as the corvette and carries a crew of more than 100 men.

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