

MEDICAL SERVICES

The medical services of the Royal Canadian Navy are largely responsible for the high standard of health throughout the service. From the beginning of the war to May 1, 1943, 678,515 hospital days (9.8 days a man each year) were lost because of sickness. This rate is no higher than that of workers in Canadian factories who do not have to contend with inclement weather, slippery decks, crowded living quarters, and handling heavy and dangerous equipment and armament.

The Research Division of the R.C.N. medical services has made a number of valuable contributions to the better health and safety of naval personnel. It is directed by Surgeon-Captain C.H. Best, R.C.N.V.R., co-discoverer of insulin, who joined the navy in June, 1941.

This division has conducted experiments in many phases of navy life and activities. Special work was done in the field of night vision. As a result, the use of low intensity red illumination was introduced to enable bridge personnel to study charts inside without seriously impairing their ability to see in the dark when they stepped outside again.

Another development is a formula which reduces seasickness. The remedy is in the form of a capsule which is taken by mouth one to two hours before sailing or in rough weather, and is effective for eight hours. It produces no harmful results, does not reduce fighting efficiency and may be repeated every eight hours if necessary.

The Research Division makes every effort to keep in touch with the special problems presented by life at sea. Observation is carried out on all types of ship. Standards of lighting and ventilation have been raised, improvement has been made in the victualling of ships, and a special vitamin preparation has been introduced to improve nutrition. Improvements have also been made to lifeboat rations.

Three R.C.N. medical officers also evolved methods of prevention and treatment for "immersion foot", an ailment usually caused by exposure in life rafts or boats for long periods. In collaboration with the R.C.A.F. research group a life jacket was produced which provides additional flotation and warmth and increases protection against under-water blast.

Royal Canadian Naval doctors have been studying tropical diseases with a view to protecting men who go to the Pacific theatre. Data and experiences of United States Navy doctors have been made available to the Canadian Navy.

CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PACIFIC WAR

Although the task of convoying merchant ships over the Atlantic remains the chief task of the Royal Canadian Navy, until there is no further threat from U-boats plans have been made for Canadian naval participation in the Pacific. Already the cruiser, H.M.C.S. Uganda is in Pacific under the command of Captain E.R. Mainguy, O.B.E., of the R.C.N. A second cruiser, Ontario, will join the Uganda.

With these two cruisers Canada hopes to send into the Pacific two fleet aircraft carriers which will be manned entirely by Canadians. The flying personnel will come from the British fleet air arm, but many will be Canadians who have enlisted in that service.

It is planned that a number of Canadian destroyers and frigates will participate in the war against Japan. With the exception of key