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III. OPERATIONS

1. In the final quarter of 1943 the new U-boat campaign against North Atlantic shipping which had begun in September and in which such high hopes had been placed by the German High Command failed ignominiously. It did not fail because there were too few U-boats. In spite of the heavy losses suffered in the summer there are still several hundred U-boats, probably enough to maintain a fleet of 100 patrolling the trans-Atlantic convoy routes continuously. It was mainly because the protection afforded to convoys was stronger than ever before and the efficiency of both aircraft and surface escorts had reached such a point that attacks on convoys were no longer worth the cost in U-boats and lives. Accordingly in spite of renewed assaults on independent shipping in the Caribbean Sea and the Indian Ocean, the tonnage sunk by U-boats declined month by month.

2. The new airfields in the Azores were, and are, increasingly important in this victorious war against U-boats. Few convoys now are sent north into the perpetual storms and inhuman cold of the high latitudes in winter. The southern route passing near the Azores, which was a route of unmitigated disaster for several convoys in the corresponding quarter of 1942, was made the standard route on November 15th, and has not so far been molested by U-boats.

3. New ships are also exerting a growing influence on the war at sea, though the great output of new vessels from U.S. and British yards is largely devoted to filling new commitments in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and manning problems are most pressing, the acute shortage of a year ago is past.

4. The first of the Canadian built frigates are already inured to convoy action on the high seas and the following list of launchings and completions indicates that the Canadian escort forces will be strongly reinforced in 1944. This list does not include two fleet destroyers due to complete in January and February in the U.K. These ships will be manned by R.C.N. personnel and will be completely up to date in equipment of every kind.

5. LAUNCHINGS

Frigates (15)

H.M.C.S. "ST. THERESE"	at Lauzon, P.Q.	October 16
"JONQUIERE"	at Quebec	October 28
"LA HULLOISE"	at Montreal	October 29
"THETFORD MINES"	at Quebec	October 30
"LONGUEUIL"	at Montreal	October 30
"BEACON HILL"	at Victoria	November 6
"LASALLE"	at Lauzon	November 12
"JOLIETTE"	at Quebec	November 12
"EASTVIEW"	at Montreal	November 17
"LEVIS"	at Quebec	November 26
"COATICOOK"	at Quebec	November 26
"RUNNYMEDE"	at Montreal	November 27
"KOKANEE"	at Victoria	November 27
"ST. PIERRE"	at Quebec	December 1
"LANARK"	at Montreal	December 10