

The Royal Canadian Navy is now manning two escort aircraft carriers of the Royal Navy. Their flying personnel is supplied by the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. In October, 1944, the first four of a group of 31 Canadian naval officers graduated as naval fliers from the Canadian Service Flying Training School at Collins Bay, Ontario. They were trained for flying duties with a view to eventual service as Royal Canadian Naval fliers.

Canadian naval forces had an important part in the invasion of France. One hundred and nine ships, manned by approximately 10,000 men and officers, took part in D-day operations. One of the flotillas of minesweepers that cleared the way through enemy waters was entirely Canadian, and Canadian ships also formed a good proportion of another unit. Two Canadian infantry landing ships, H.M.C.S. PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY carried thousands of Canadians and allied troops across the Channel. These two ships also took part in the invasion of southern France in mid-August. Six of Canada's largest and most powerful destroyers took part in pre-invasion and invasion operations which bombarded the enemy coast. They, together with Canadian motor torpedo boat flotillas, continued to harass enemy shipping throughout the summer and protect the allied supply routes. Before the invasion, Canadian ships had operated in many battle theatres, including the Atlantic Ocean, the north Pacific, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and other special territories. Two complete landing craft flotillas helped land the Eighth Army in Sicily. Late in 1943 a large number of Canadians arrived in the United Kingdom to man a Canadian motor gunboat flotilla to fight from United Kingdom shores with ships of the Royal Navy's famed "mosquito navy."

In addition to the Canadians on Canadian ships, thousands of R.C.N. personnel have been lent to the Royal Navy and have been fighting on British boats. They have been in service in every part of the world.

In line with the growing strength and expanding functions of the navy, in January, 1944, Canada sent Vice-Admiral P.W. Nelles, chief of the naval staff, to the United Kingdom with the new rank of senior flag officer. This step followed the transfer overseas of the men who had held the posts of chief of staff in the other two services -- Lieutenant-General Kenneth Stuart, chief of Canadian general staff, and Air Marshal L.S. Breadner, chief of air staff. The three men who had guided the building of the Canadian forces in Canada now represent their services overseas.

Canada also has its own merchant navy. Canadian merchant seamen are providing the crews for a fleet of merchant ships which has grown from 37 at the outbreak of war to nearly 150 ships in less than five years--a fleet which may total more than 300 at the end of the war.

Since the outbreak of war 994 Canadian merchant seamen have lost their lives by enemy action. Of these 628 were serving on Canadian merchant vessels, 250 on United Kingdom ships, and 116 died while serving on ships of other allied nations. In addition, 145 merchant seamen are interned in enemy prison camps and 37 have been repatriated in exchanges of prisoners.

Men of this un-uniformed service have maintained shipping lanes to the United Kingdom, shared in the evacuations of Dunkirk, Greece and Crete, aided in the establishment of beachheads in the Mediterranean area, and pushed through dangerous waters to Russia.

ARMY

First contingent of the Canadian Army arrived overseas in December, 1941, and other Canadian Army units have been building up Canadian armed strength in that theatre of war ever since. For several years the chief task of the Canadian Army Overseas was to defend the United Kingdom from possible invasion and to prepare for action. By September, 1944, Canada's entire overseas army was in action in Europe--First Army headquarters, two corps headquarters, five divisions and two armoured brigades.

In August, 1944, it was made known that the First Canadian Army was in action in France -- the first time in history that Canada has had a separate army in the field. Commanded by Lieutenant-General H.D.G. Crerar, it is made up of the Second Canadian Corps, (which consists of three wholly Canadian divisions) a British infantry division, a Polish armoured division, and forces from the Netherlands and Belgium, many of whom were trained in Canada.