

1,000 Convoy Vessels Join 'Boneyard Fleet'

Sydney, N.S., June 12 (CP). — Waiting for the cutting tools of the decommissioning "surgeons," a group of 26 once-proud Canadian warships lie at anchor in Sydney Harbor, their days of usefulness ended with completion of their long and arduous North Atlantic convoy job.

They will be followed by others of the "Boneyard Fleet," as these ships have been nicknamed now that they are headed for honorable discharges. Hundreds of other Canadian naval vessels will follow them, to be stripped of their armament and all equipment that can be used in the Pacific War. The total may run over 1,000.

Many of them have seen four or more years service, plying the icy North Atlantic waters in winter or bucking summer gales as they scurried protectingly along the flanks of lumbering convoys that crossed and recrossed the ocean. Now that the war in Europe has ended, and merchant ships travel alone and with lights blazing across the Atlantic, these vessels are no longer needed.

After they are stripped of their war gear here, they will steam to Sorel, Que., where they will be turned over to War Assets Corporation for disposal.

In port now are five venerable four-stacked destroyers—Columbia, St. Francis, Buxton, Annapolis and Hamilton—turned over to the Canadian Navy by the United States Government early in the war.

Besides the four-stackers, there are three Bangor type minesweeper escort vessels and 18 corvettes.

Among the more famous is HMCS Chambly, under the command of Lt.-Cmdr. J. B. Shaw, RCNVR, of Victoria, which holds the distinction of being the first Canadian ship of this war or any other war to sink a German U-boat. She has been in on two assists on sub kills and has salvage and rescues at sea to her credit during 230,000 miles of sea travel.

Another to reach the last phase is HMCS Calgary under command of Lieut. George Orr of Toronto, with claim to being in on two kills and a probable third.

Others include HMCS Edmundston, commanded by Lieut. John Leckie of Vancouver; HMCS Matapedia, skippered by Lieut. Chris F. Usher of Victoria; HMCS Chicoutimi, under Lieut. A. Earle Griffin of Halifax; HMCS Buctouche, commanded by Lieut. H. Esson Young of Victoria, and HMCS Dauphin, commanded by Lieut. Edward O'Kelly of Toronto.

Daily more are arriving, as Sydney harbor bustles to its greatest activity in years.

Aboard almost every ship coming in, 50 per cent or more of crew members have volunteered for the Pacific. These men are given 58 days leave, and then they will return to specified bases or ships for future postings.

Capt. C. M. R. Schwerdt, RC naval officer in charge here, is supervising the job, while Capt. Paul Cross, RCNVR of Saint John, N.B., is in charge of destroying unneeded equipment.

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