

'Esquimalt' Officer Tells of Heroism When Vessel Sunk

On Thursday two young airmen—one was 25, the other 24—were killed when their Mosquito bomber crashed at Calgary Airport. Flt. Lt. Maurice Briggs, DSO, DFC, DFM, had had 145 operations over Germany; FO. Johnny Baker, DFC and Bar, had been on 115 operations over enemy territory, 105 of them with Briggs. They were killed on a tour across Canada to stimulate Canadians into buying Victory Bonds.

Only two young men have given their lives for Canada's 8th Victory Loan, but many, many others who have come more close to danger than most bond buyers will ever have to do have stepped up to tell Canadians why they should buy bonds. Latest on Toronto's list was Lieut. Gordon Ball, RCNVR, of Toronto, who spoke at the City Hall yesterday noon. Here is the story he told the crowd:

"Ladies and gentlemen, this afternoon I would like to tell you of one of the proudest ships in the Royal Canadian Navy—it was my last ship, HMCS Esquimalt. She was commissioned in October, 1942, and since sailed the North Atlantic engaged in any sort of work.

In Fog With U-Boat

"I would like to tell you of one little escapade off Newfoundland. We had already had a submarine report, and it was time for me to go off watch. I tried to get some sleep, but at 2 o'clock the action bell rang through the ship, and in 30 seconds every man was at his post. The fog had closed in—the submarine surfaced 500 yards off our stern, but we could not see a single thing—it was like being trapped in a dark room with a murderer—he can't see you, and you can't see him, and neither of you can do a thing. There was a heavy sea running, and after half an hour every one's nerves were quite on edge. I think we got the sub—none was seen around for a month in that area.

"Another time we were up in the Arctic circle, and were blocked in by ice floes for 14 days. We could not move either forward or backward, and had to sit there and stand watch for the entire two weeks. You get to know your shipmates pretty well in that time. Those same lads were lost three weeks ago when a torpedo hit them.

Exhaustion Cost Life

"There were Bill Stevens and Herb Knight. Herb was married last fall to a girl from Leamington. He dove off the ship, and swam to a Carley float. He noticed that the bottom had been blown off, so he dived off and swam over to another float, and dragged it back, securing both floats together. Herb then climbed back on one of the Carley floats, but died about five minutes later from exposure and overexhaustion. He saved the lives of some of his shipmates before he died. Those two floats kept them alive.

"Johnnie Monahan left one of Toronto's East End high schools two years ago. He will never come back.

"Skipper Belleazzi married, and had three children in a small French village in Quebec. He will never come back.

"Jimmie Roberts of Victoria, B.C., came back into this war in his 40's, and had been in since the beginning. He will never be back. Johnnie Smart married a Toronto girl. He will never be back. Johnnie Parker was from Vancouver, and one of the best sportsmen on the west coast. He will never be back.

Buy Bonds for Pacific War

"Ladies and gentlemen, the only way to remember these fellows is to buy bonds so that those of us who will enlist for the Pacific can wreak vengeance for their deaths—and if we are to go to the Pacific you will have to send us there by your purchase of bonds."

The 8th Victory Loan campaign closes today, and if Toronto is to reach its \$250 million quota Torontonians must put \$20 million worth of bonds in the kitty today. Toronto loan headquarters regards the unusually high subscription of \$21,843,000 on Thursday as an indication that "people want to see the job here at home done well and completely." If you want to buy a bond or buy another bond, call AD. 0331, and a salesman will call on you today.

149

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