# Chapter 8 Part 2

## "VICTORY:

## MAY 1944 - MAY 1945" (cont'd)

*... Continued from Chapter Twenty Five Part 1 .....As a troopship was scheduled to leave Halifax a few days later, naval and air patrols were stepped up, but on Christmas Eve 1944 Hornbostel struck again to sink the Bangor Class minesweeper HMCS Clayoquot three miles off the Sambro Light. A massive task force of 14 ASW ships and 7 smaller vessels assembled to find Clayoquot's killer but U-806 lay on the bottom for 24 hours before sneaking away without harm.*

**A "real navy:" The RCN at high tide**

NSHQ in Ottawa could be forgiven for not taking problems on its own doorstep more seriously as it was distracted by greater thoughts in late 1944. Its long-cherished ambition of becoming a "real navy" had finally been achieved. In September 1939 the Canadian navy had consisted of 3,252 officers and sailors manning 6 destroyers, 5 minesweepers and 2 auxiliary vessels – by late 1944, it consisted of 92,441 officers and sailors, both male and female, manning more than 400 vessels of all types. The problems caused by this expansion, so evident in 1941-1943, had disappeared and the Royal Canadian Navy was now one of the six largest navies in the world and a force to be reckoned with.

While *U-806* was causing excitement around Halifax, senior officers at NSHQ were finalizing plans to dispatch a Canadian naval force to the -Pacific theatre. It would consist of two light fleet carriers to be obtained from the RN, two light cruisers just commissioned in Canadian service, 10 fleet destroyers and 40 of the RCN's most modern frigates and corvettes. Even this was a scaled-back version of the staff's original plan, which would have added an additional 58 warships to this force – making a total of 110 Canadian warships operating against the Japanese Empire. Impressive as this naval contribution looks, when compared to the RCN's strength in 1939, it was not even the major part of the national war effort as the RCN was the smallest of Canada's three fighting services. By late 1944, of a population of 11 million, just under one million Canadian men and women were in uniform, including 41 per cent of the males of military age (18-45). More impressive was the fact that almost all were volunteers because Canada never had a wartime conscription programme for overseas service and only 16,000 of the nearly 100,000 men (popularly known as "Zombies") drafted for home defence were ever sent to serve in Europe.

**Advanced -- Asdic Equipment in the Last Year of the War**

This photograph, taken on the corvette HMCS **Cobourg** in July 1944 shows the technical progression of anti-submarine technology during the war. This is a Type 144 Asdic which, with various attachments, permitted escorts to obtain and maintain accurate contacts in different water conditions out to 2500 yards. The attack was actually controlled by the Asdic officer, seen here standing behind the HSD ratings manning the set, who communicated information to the captain on the bridge of the vessel. The Type 144 was mounted on British escorts beginning in late 1942 but Canadian warships did not receive it until 1944. (Photograph by W.H. Pugsley, courtesy, National Archives of Canada, PA 139273)

**"Our watchword remains the same!" Last Battles in European Waters, 1945**

The staff's ambitious plans for distant theatres and a postwar fleet, however, overlooked the fact that Dönitz's submarine crews were still fighting hard. On 1 January 1945, the staff of the U-boat high command sent a New Year's Day Message to all its boats at sea: "Our watchword remains the same! Attack, let 'em have it, sink ships. Sieg Heil!."[3] To this, Dönitz added a personal message of encouragement: "The striking power of our Service will be strengthened in the New Year by new Boats" – a reference to the Types XXI and XXIII which were now starting to be commissioned.[4] As the War Diary of the U-boat service summed up the situation:

the loss of the western waters [French bases] would have been disastrous if our future U-boat operations depended on using the same types of boats as before. But the new boats of Type XXI … will be able to break through to the Atlantic despite concentrated opposition and to operate with success in the North Atlantic and in the remote operational areas.[5]

The widespread deployment of these new submarines was a source of anxiety to the Allied naval forces and it was fortunate that in late 1944 the massive bombing of the German railway network seriously delayed their introduction. Dönitz had hoped to be receiving 23 Type XXIII and 33 Type XXI boats per month by late 1944 but these figures were never met and only one Type XXI was close to being operational in February 1945 when the supreme Allied command issued a directive making any aspect of the production of Type XXI U-boats a priority target for the -Allied air forces. In the end, however, it was Allied land forces that put an end to the threat when they overran the shipyards building these new weapon systems.

**Norway -- the U-boats' Last Refuge**
As the Soviet and Allied armies advanced to the German borders in late 1944, U-boat operations were increasingly conducted from Norway. In this photo, taken in the autumn of 1944, **U-190** enters the base at Kristiansand astern of another submarine. (Courtesy, Werner Hirschmann)

In January 1945, when signal intelligence revealed that the Germans themselves did not expect to have large numbers of the U-boats in service before July, the objective became to destroy as many of the older craft as possible to reduce overall enemy numbers. It was known that, as the disruptions caused by the transfer of the U-boat fleet from France to Germany and Norway had ended, more craft were at sea and the morale of their crews, as exemplified by the number of determined attacks made, was getting better as they mastered the snorkel. The Admiralty feared a renewed offensive in eastern Atlantic coastal waters that would disrupt the flow of supplies to the armies on the European mainland, and large naval and maritime air forces were concentrated to prevent this – 426 escort vessels and 389 aircraft. The result was that, between January and April 1945, 25 U-boats were sunk in British waters for the loss of 48 merchant ships, mostly small vessels.

Three of these successes were gained by the RCN. On 16 February Escort Group 9 sank *U-309*, a Type VII, off the coast of Scotland (although the kill was not confirmed for nearly 40 years after the event). During the evening of 7 March, Escort Group 25 (formed in September 1944), operating in the Irish Sea, picked up a good radar and ASDIC contact and illuminated a snorkel by searchlight. The group attacked with Hedgehog, bringing *Kapitänleutnant* Wolf-gang Herwartz's *U-1302* briefly to the surface, but the Type VII dived again. At that moment, Lieutenant Commander Howard Quinn, RCNVR, captain of the frigate *Strathadam* and Senior Officer, received a radio message from the commander of a nearby British support group telling him to hold off attacking as the Briton was coming to take charge of the operation. Although the arrogant "Juicer"* officer outranked Quinn, the Canadian was having none of it and firmly replied that, if the Royal Navy intended to rob his group of their kill, they had better be prepared to "come in shooting!"[6] Nothing more was heard of the matter and the operation concluded successfully when further attacks brought convincing evidence that *U-1302* had been -destroyed.

The sinking of *Oberleutnant zur See* Werner Strübing's Type VII *U‑1003* was even more dramatic. In the evening of 20 March Escort Group 26, consisting of the frigates *Beacon Hill*, *New Glasgow*, *Ribble* and *Sussexvale*, had just left Londonderry when a lookout on *New Glasgow* saw a snorkel trailing smoke moving through the water directly toward his ship. Before anyone on the frigate's bridge could react, *New Glasgow* -became the first Canadian warship (and possibly the only Allied warship) to be rammed by a U-boat during the Second World War. Badly damaged, *U-1003* settled on the bottom while, not as badly damaged but just as surprised, *New Glasgow* joined her comrades of EG 25 in carrying out an ASDIC search, which failed to obtain a firm contact. As the Canadian warships receded in the distance, *U-1003* limped slowly away but two days later Strübing ordered his crew to abandon their craft and take to their life rafts, where they spent about eight hours in the water before being rescued by HMCS *Thetford Mines* of Escort Group 25. Although the evidence appeared to show that *U-1003* had more or less committed submarine suicide, the Admiralty graciously approved the award of a kill to *New Glasgow*, the last of 33 Axis submarines sunk by the RCN during the Second World War.

### "The typical noises of a sinking ship:" Final actions in Canadian waters

Ironically, the RCN was not as successful in its own waters. Admiral Leonard Murray had nowhere near the forces available in the Northwest Atlantic that Sir Max Horton had in British waters – Murray possessed 89 escort vessels in his theatre in early 1945 but many were newly-commissioned vessels still working up to full efficiency. The RCAF's Eastern Air Command had seven squadrons with 94 aircraft but the advent of the snorkel and U-boat radar detectors had counterbalanced the effectiveness of aircraft. The worst problems affecting operations in Murray's theatre stemmed from the weather, which was at best variable, and normally foul in the winter months; and the incredibly bad ASDIC conditions. When an American hunter-killer group based on USS *Bogue* – the most successful wartime escort carrier in terms of submarine kills – operated briefly off Nova Scotia in the autumn of 1944

**The U-boat's Most Dangerous Enemy**

Aircraft, either land based or shipborne, proved crucial to winning the Battle of the Atlantic. Allied land-based aircraft are credited with destroying 209 Axis submarines during the war and Royal Canadian Air Force units accounted for 21 of those kills. Here a Catalina of 116 (Bomber Reconnaissance) Squadron, RCAF drops a stick of Mark XI aerial depth charges on a training exercise in 1943. The Catalina flew in Canadian service from 1941 onward and, although it range was less than Liberator and Sunderland VLR aircraft, it performed very well. (Canadian Forces Photo Unit, RE 64-1044)

they got a taste of the conditions that Canadian sailors had always endured and considered that their short northern tour was probably the group's "most frustrating time of the war."[7]

There were three U-boats in Murray's theatre when Dönitz sent his New Year's Day Message and they soon went into action. On 4 January 1945, *U-1232* ambushed a small convoy sailing from Sydney to Halifax, just east of the entrance to the latter port. In the space of 20 minutes, it sank two ships but escaped detection despite a determined four-day search by the Canadian Escort Group 16 and two American hunter-killer groups.

The commander of *U-1232, Kapitän zur See* Kurt Dobratz (who had the unusual background of having served eight years in *Luftwaffe*), was not at all dismayed by this show of strength. He stayed in place at the harbour mouth watching the traffic until 14 January when he found himself in a good position to attack the Boston to Halifax convoy BX 141, which was protected by two minesweepers and Escort Group 27 with four frigates. The convoy was strung out in a long line to enter the harbour when the third ship in the column, *British Freedom*, was torpedoed at 2241 hours. There was only a minor explosion and it took some time for the escort vessels to realize what was happening. Before they recovered, Dobratz torpedoed two more merchantmen including the *Athelviking*, the flagship of the convoy *(cont'd)*

# MARITIME AIR – A POWERFUL WEAPON

**Land-based maritime air**

Although the submarine threat was largely discounted by western navies during the interwar period, Britain did create Coastal Command, the maritime air component of the RAF, in 1938 and it came under the operational control of the RN at the outbreak of war. In September 1939, Coastal Command possessed 298 aircraft, of which just over half were operational, and although it did its best in the first 18 months of the war, it suffered from a lack of VLR (Very Long Range) patrol aircraft and effective weapons. The bomb in service at this time was not only useless against submarines; it would often bounce upward and damage or destroy the aircraft that dropped it. Coastal Command aircraft proved most successful in the "scarecrow" role and their presence in British waters forced Dönitz to constantly shift his U-boats westward beyond air range until by the spring of 1941 German submarines were well out into the mid-Atlantic.

Britain and Canada countered by establishing airbases in Northern Ireland, Iceland and Newfoundland. Given the range of the aircraft in service at this time, however, there remained an "air gap" or "black hole" in the middle Atlantic where U-boats could operate with impunity on the surface. Attempts by Coastal Command to obtain Liberator VLR aircraft from RAF's Bomber Command to seal this gap were unavailing until late 1942 and it was only in the spring of 1943 that enough Liberators entered service to eliminate it. In the meantime, new weapons and equipment increased the lethality of aircraft. The Mark VIII, later Mark XI, aerial depth charges, smaller than their naval equivalent and fitted with nose cones and fins, came into service in 1941-1942 as did the first ASV (Air Surface Vessel) radar sets. The results were immediate – between September 1939 and July 1942, maritime aircraft made 327 attacks on U-boats, sinking two and sharing in the sinking of four. but between July and December 1942, 299 attacks resulted in 34 Axis submarine kills as compared to 31 by surface ships.

In 1941 the Royal Canadian Air Force became a major player in the maritime air war when that service's Eastern Air Command started flying from bases in Newfoundland. The command's strength increased steadily until by the spring of 1943 – the time of the climactic convoy battles in the Atlantic which broke the back of Dönitz's *U-Boot-Waffe* – it had 11 squadrons with about 150 aircraft in service. As illustrated on the map opposite, new airbases and better aircraft gradually decreased the size of the "air gap," and when it was finally closed in mid-1943, the RAF, RCAF, USN and US Army Air Force had more than 700 aircraft available for service in the North Atlantic.

Thereafter, land-based maritime air declined in numbers but increased in power as late war aircraft were much better than their predecessors. By 1945, the RAF and RCAF deployed just under 500 modern aircraft equipped with centimetric radar and lethal anti-submarine weapons including sono buoys (a sonar canister dropped into the sea that could detect a submerged U-boat and transmit information about its location back to the aircraft) and homing torpedoes.

**Carrier-based maritime air**

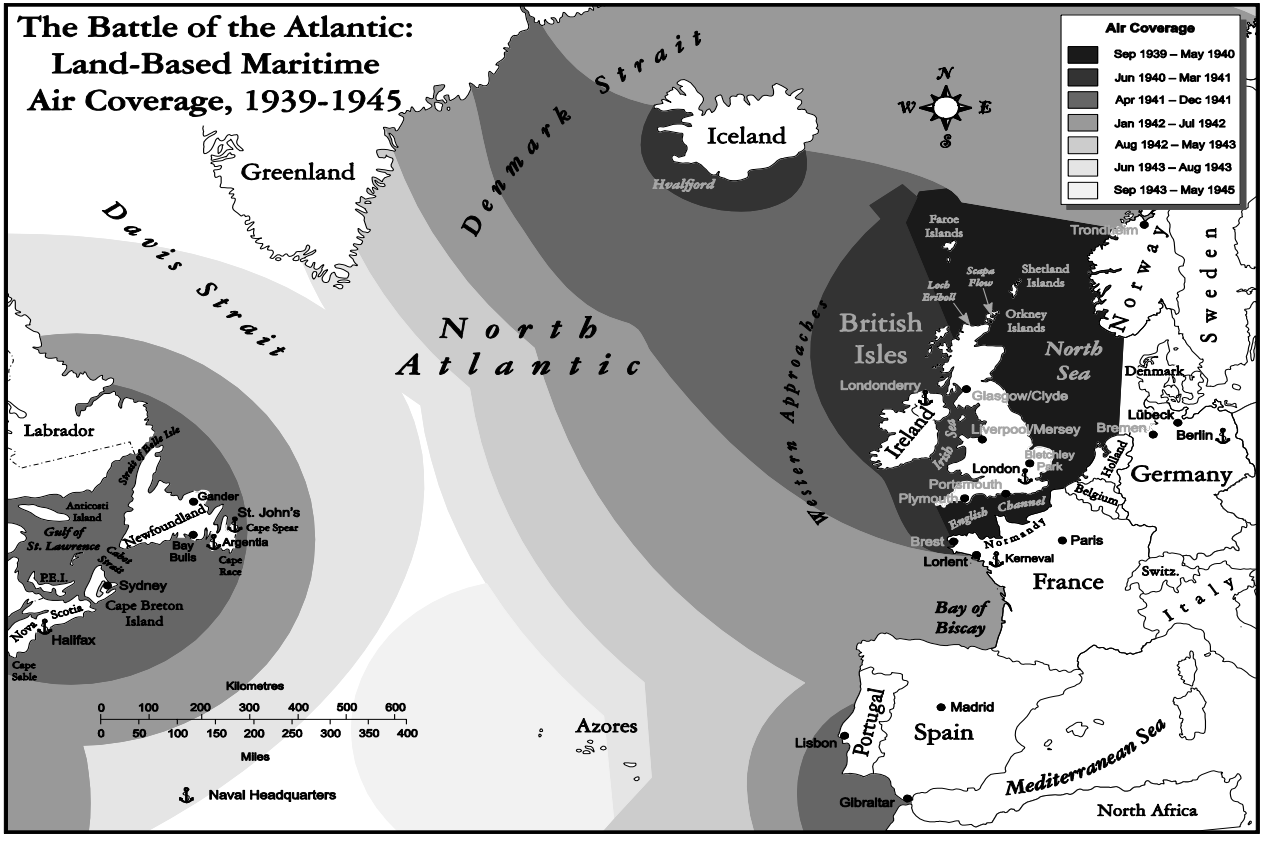
Early in the Battle of the Atlantic it was recognized that the provision of carrier-based close air support was absolutely essential. Large fleet carriers were not useful for this work and were required for more conventional naval operations, and in any case their construction was a lengthy business. As the need was immediate, a decision was made to convert merchant hulls into small escort or "jeep" carriers that would carry fewer aircraft. A shortage of suitable ships and aircraft delayed the introduction of this type of vessel until 1941 when a captured German merchantman was converted into the first escort carrier, HMS *Audacity*. Although the intention was that she would provide air cover against land-based German aircraft, *Audacity* immediately proved her usefulness in ASW while escorting a convoy from Britain to Gibraltar in September 1941 when her aircraft assisted in the sinking of four U-boats. Unfortunately, *Audacity* was a prime target and was torpedoed during the same convoy. Her success, however, validated the

concept of the escort carrier, and in 1942 the RN and USN commissioned 14 of these vessels but they were deployed, not in the North Atlantic, but in European waters to protect Arctic and Gibraltar convoys from enemy aircraft.

In the meantime, air cover for Atlantic convoys was provided by Merchant Aircraft Carriers, merchant vessels with a superimposed flying deck that could operate three or four Swordfish biplanes and still carry cargo. The first of the MAC ships entered service in October 1942 and, in all, 19 vessels of this type served on the Atlantic. It was quickly discovered that the Swordfish was not capable of destroying U-boats and its most useful role was to serve as a spotter for convoy escorts.

The perilous situation on the Atlantic in the first quarter of 1943 required the use of the much more effective escort carrier. In March 1943, the USS *Bogue* became the first such vessel to accompany a trans-Atlantic convoy and she was shortly followed by HM Ships *Biter* and *Archer*. At first, these carriers were made part of the convoy escort, but it was found that their best use was as part of hunter-killer support groups which operated independently but could reinforce the escort of any heavily-threatened convoy. Carrier aircraft were not only directly effective against U-boats; they provided powerful assistance to surface escorts and soon proved their worth. Between April and December 1943, American and British escort carriers sank, or helped surface vessels to sink, 25 U-boats.

Ironically, although the RCN manned two escort carriers, *Nabob* and *Puncher*, during the latter years of the war, neither ship was ever used in ASW and they were deployed in more traditional carrier roles.



**The bottom line**

The possession of powerful maritime air forces was crucial in winning the Battle of the Atlantic against the U-boats and the evidence for this statement is found in the statistics. During the Second World War, land-based maritime aircraft sank 209 Axis submarines by their own efforts and assisted surface vessels to sink 30, while carrier-based aircraft sank 30 submarines by their own efforts and assisted in the sinking of 12 submarines. For its part, the RCAF accounted for the destruction of 21 submarines, either by aircraft alone or in --co‑operation with surface vessels.

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*(cont'd)* commodore. By this time Escort Group 27 was wide awake but the shallow waters being poor for ASDIC, the warships began to make depth charge attacks on likely firing positions in an attempt to scare off the -attacker. Dobratz ignored the fireworks and was lining up his fourth shot when, through his periscope, he observed the frigate HMCS *Ettrick* bearing down on him. He fired and dived at the last moment but almost left it too late as *Ettrick* struck his submarine a glancing blow, smashing its periscope and tearing up its bridge structure. Unaware he had struck a U-boat, *Ettrick*'s captain, Lieutenant Commander E.M. More, RCNR, thought he had scraped against an underwater rock. American and Canadian warships carried out a three-day hunt for *U-1232* but Dobratz was able to -escape and return safely to his base in Norway.

Dobratz's highly successful cruise convinced Dönitz that good pickings were to be had in the Northwest Atlantic. Incredibly enough, given the fact that Allied armies were now closing in on Berlin, between February and early April 1945, he dispatched at least 12 and possibly as many as 14 U‑boats to this area in a final throw of the dice. Ultra intelligence warned American and Canadian naval commanders of the planned onslaught and they were able to take timely measures to defeat it. Six of the U-boats formed *Gruppe Seewolf* to operate in waters adjacent to the United States but four were almost immediately sunk by two powerful American "barrier forces," each consisting of two escort carriers and 20 destroyers. Two others, *U-879* and *U-881*, fell victim to American hunter-killer groups off the Grand Banks.

At least five of the U-boats (the evidence is contradictory), however, operated in Murray's theatre in March and April 1945. The most successful was *U-190*, a Type IX boat which left Germany in February 1945 to carry out a lengthy patrol off the Canadian coast. During this operation *U‑190* did not once surface, but used its snorkel to recharge its batteries. The commanding officer, *Oberleutnant zur See* Hans-Edwin Reith, was aware that there was a massive search on to find him but was determined to carry out his mission, which was basically to tie up Allied air and naval forces and *U-190* accomplished this objective with great success.

On 16 April, Reith was off the mouth of Halifax harbour when he heard ASDIC pulses on his hull. Taking a hurried look through his periscope, he sighted the Bangor Class minesweeper HMCS *Esquimalt* on a routine patrol and fired off an acoustic torpedo which sank the Canadian warship in less than four minutes. According to *Oberleutnant* (*Ingenieur)* Werner Hirschmann, the submarine's engineer officer, the crew of *U-190* knew they had scored a victory when, after the explosion of their torpedo, they heard "the typical noises of a sinking ship."[8] Most of *Esquimalt*'s crew managed to abandon their ship but, due to a tragic series of errors, it was nearly seven hours before a rescue ship arrived to pick up the survivors – by that time only 26 men of 70 were still alive. A massive search for *U-190* was immediately mounted by all available Canadian naval forces but it slipped away.

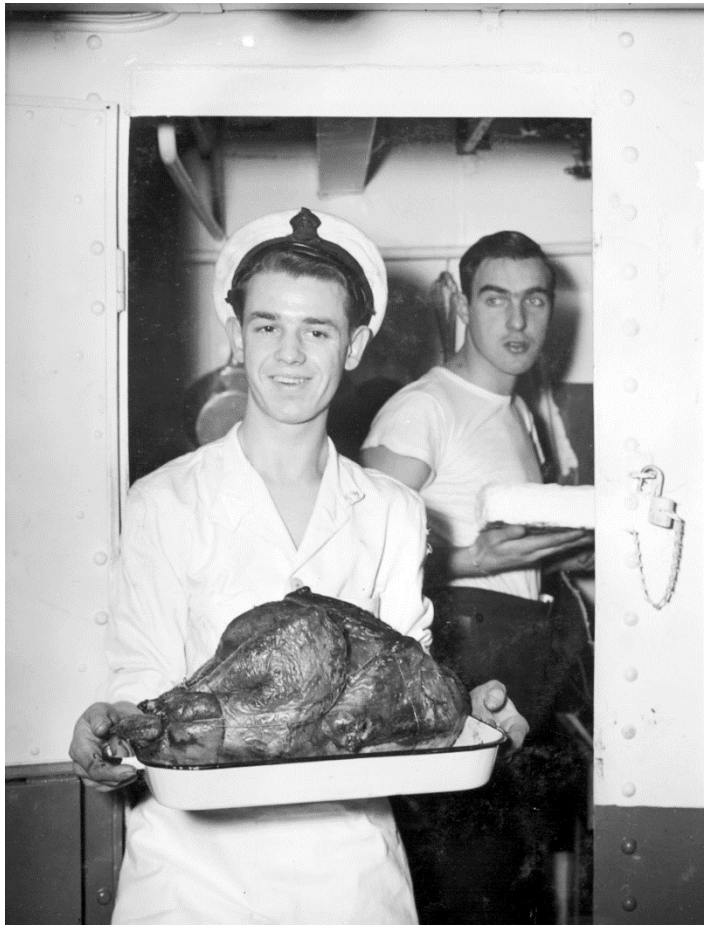
**"Full of respect and fairness:" The enemy surrenders, May 1945**

On 30 April 1945, as Soviet troops approached to within yards of his bunker in Berlin, Adolf Hitler committed suicide. One of his last acts was to name Dönitz to succeed him as leader of the Third Reich but, by this time, most of the U-boat bases in Germany were in Allied hands and only Norway

remained as a refuge. On 4 May, Germany surrendered unconditionally and on 8 May the Admiralty broadcast a message in plain language to all U-boats at sea or at their bases to sail immediately to designated Allied ports and surrender. This was followed by a similar message from Dönitz. Most of the U-boat crews, 221 out of 371 boats in service, chose to scuttle their craft but 150 obeyed the order to surrender. The final act had not come a moment too soon – there were 83 Type XXI and 37 Type XXIII U-boats working up, although only one Type XXI and a few Type XXIIIs actually entered service before the war ended.

*U-190* was on its way back to Germany on 10 May when it received instructions to surrender and immediately complied by surfacing and transmitting its position in clear language. The next day the frigate HMCS *Victoriaville* and the corvette HMCS *Thorlock* arrived and removed most of the crew, leaving only *Oberleutnant (Ingenieur)* Hirschmann and a few of his engine-room personnel to run the submarine as it headed for Bay Bulls in Newfoundland. A Canadian prize crew was put on board and Hirschmann recalled that relations between the former enemies were "full of respect and fairness" and particularly remembered "being on the conning tower at night, listening to piped-up Strauss waltzes and discussing with my Canadian captors, family, war, and other problems of the world."[9] On board *Thorlock* relations between the Canadians and Germans were also cordial – Seaman James Haigh remembered that "Old sea boots, streetcar tickets, pictures and coins were traded to the Germans for German money, buttons, badges, etc."[10]

A more elaborate and impressive ceremony occurred at Loch Eriboll in Scotland when Escort Group 9, consisting of the frigates *Matane* (Senior Officer), *Loch Alvie*, *Monnow*, *Nene* and *St. Pierre*, escorted 13 U-boats on a 500-mile journey into this remote anchorage. As the convoy, with Canadian warships ahead and astern of the U-boats, which were formed in two columns, approached the loch on 16 May, they were surrounded by dashing fast attack craft and small boats full of press photographers, while aircraft circled overhead, just in case the U-boats decided to go out with a bang. The British press made a great event out of this surrender but, as usual, got it wrong by stating that the escorts were British ships, which, as the Senior Officer of Escort Group 9, Commander A.F.C. Layard, RN, -remembered, made his Canadian crews "awfully sore."[11] Layard was later criticized for allowing his men to fraternize with their prisoners, but at that point having just completed nearly 15 months of continuous service at sea, Layard did not really care what shore-based officers thought of him – he was just glad the whole thing was over.

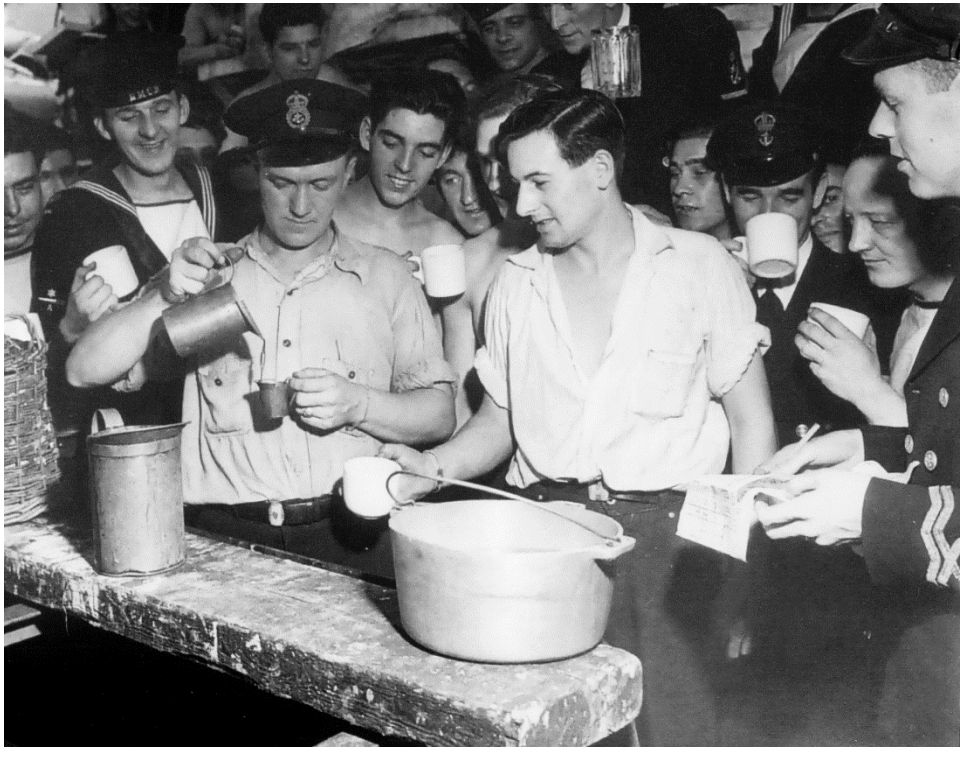


**Christmas Dinner, 1944**

The cook of HMCS **Wallaceburg**, an Algerine Class minesweeper, proudly displays his art on Christmas Day 1944. Meals like this were very rare at sea but **Wallaceburg**, which had just been commissioned, was in Halifax on that Happy Day and her cook took due advantage of the occasion. (Canadian Naval Memorial Trust)


**"Being in all respects ready for sea:" HMCS La Hulloise, 1944**

**A fine study of the River Class frigate, La Hulloise, entering Liverpool late in the war. Commissioned in May 1944, La Hulloise served mainly with Escort Group 25 in British waters and participated in the sinking of U-1302 in March 1945. Ordered back to Canada for tropicalization for Pacific service, she was paid off in December 1945. Recommissioned in 1949, La Hulloise was converted to a Prestonian Class frigate and was in commission until 1965 when she was sold for breaking up. (Courtesy, Imperial War Museum, A-28098)**



**"Hands to muster for grog!"**

**The high point of a sailor's day was the free 2.5 ounce tot of powerful overproof Demerara service rum he received with the compliments of his grateful Majesty, King George VI. It had to be mixed with water or coca-cola in the ratio of 1 rum to 2 other liquid and had to consumed immediately. In this photograph taken on a corvette, the cox'n (the senior petty officer on board) has mixed the raw rum in the wicker covered flask and the water from the, pot into the large metal jug to make grog. He uses the smaller metal jug to pour the grog into the 2.5 ounce measure and from there into the cups of the eagerly waiting sailors. Meanwhile, as required by regulations, an officer observes the procedure to make sure that the tot is drunk immediately by each man and not traded or stored. Chiefs and Petty Officers, as befitting the august status of their rank, were permitted to drink their tot undiluted. The custom of providing a daily issue of rum to sailors began in the Royal Navy in 1687 and, after 1740, it was mixed with water to make grog. Originally each sailor received a pint, half at noon and half at 6 PM, but this was with good reason progressively reduced. The issue of rum ended in the Royal and Royal Canadian Navies about 1970. (Canadian Naval Memorial Trust)**

## The battle ends

The surrender of the U-boats was the last act in the Battle of the Atlantic, which had lasted 2,075 days from 3 September 1939 when the liner *Athenia* was sunk, to 8 May 1945 when Germany surrendered. During that time, Dönitz had commanded 1,181 submarines, although only just over 800 reached operational service. He had lost 756 of them and 28,000 of the 40,000 men who served in the U-boat arm. It was an incredibly high casualty rate, but, as stated earlier, although the morale of the German submarine crews sometimes wavered, it never broke and they did not stop fighting until ordered to stop.

In doing so, they inflicted grievous losses on the Allied powers. It has been estimated that the Battle of the Atlantic cost the lives of 50,000 Allied sailors and merchant seamen and the loss of 2,603 merchant vessels and 175 warships. The Royal Canadian Navy's share of this loss was 24 warships and nearly 1,800 men while the Canadian merchant marine lost 30 ships and 1,064 sailors.

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest, most desperately fought, and most important campaign of the Second World War. The preservation of the sea lanes from North America to Britain was the foundation for the western Allies' victory over Germany and all other operations on land, sea and air depended on it (including the maintenance of Soviet fighting power on the Eastern Front). If it had been lost, the war in Europe would have been lost. That it was won is a tribute to the courage and determination of the men of the merchant marine and the Allied navies who served at sea and the

many others, both men and women, who supported them on land and in the air.

**"At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them"**

**A naval sentry stands post with reversed arms at the Battle of the Atlantic Memorial at Point Pleasant Park in Halifax on which are inscribed the names of every Canadian who died at sea during the Second World War. Off station on the water can be seen HMCS Sackville, the Canadian Naval Memorial and the last surviving corvette. (Photography by Jack Pritchard, courtesy of the Halifax Chronicle-Herald)**

The Royal Canadian Navy, which had started the war as a tiny service and grown to become the third largest Allied navy, played a major role in this lengthy and costly but very necessary struggle. In the end, victory in the Atlantic would not have been achieved without the sacrifices made by those Canadians who placed themselves in peril on the sea between 1939 and 1945.