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A Royal Canadian Navy Historical Project



Excerpts from a wartime diary

June 1st to June 13th, 1944 on HMCS St Laurent

Supporting the D-Day invasion of Normandie

***Thursday June 1st, 1944** - Still in Mobile, had big regatta today for the flotilla. Old "Sally" walked away with all the honours. I was with the seaboats crew that put her in first place, feel pretty pleased with myself, made myself 16 shillings.

***Friday June 2nd, 1944** - Stayed around today, went in to oil, pulled out at 1 am for the English Channel. Jimmy told us what we were to do.

***Saturday June 3rd, 1944** - Still going to our area. Got there about noon and started sweeping in sight of the shore, lots of battle wagons around. Looks like the invasion is about to start.

***Sunday June 4th, 1944** - Still sweeping, had a few panic stations but nothing came of it, invasion is to start tomorrow.

***Monday June 5th, 1944** - Still sweeping, went into Plymouth, invasion put off for the day as the weather held them up. We were told that it is supposed to start at six o'clock the next morning.

***Tuesday June 6th, 1944** - On watch at six in the morning and heard the big guns open up so I guess the party is on, our job is to keep the subs from getting into the invasion area, pretty quiet down here.

***Wednesday June 7th, 1944** - Still in our own area but raring to go, had a contact with something on the surface so went after it but couldn't find it, we are now in our new area which is about 20 miles off the French coast, we are sweeping off Brest, pretty quiet yet but still hoping.

***Thursday June 8th, 1944** - Picked up two airmen this morning who had crashed off the coast of France. We went in pretty close to the coast to get them, the other flotilla had a running fight all night with subs, seven fish were fired at them, we have been after two all day that aircraft had spotted but as yet no luck.

***Friday June 9th, 1944** - Picked up three enemy destroyers today but Tribals came out and engaged them, they got two but other one got away so we chased it to the coast but couldn't catch up to her. All the boys were pretty excited but were let down. We ran into lots of fun at night

with E boats. Had action stations for 2 hrs but the things were too fast for us, but maybe we will have a chance yet. Forgot about sub Thursday night, right in front of us but it also got away.

***Saturday June 10th, 1944** - Changed our sweep again are around the convoy. Going over now and what a pile of ships and planes, the sky is full of them. No wonder why we only see the odd enemy. Tonight was pretty exciting; lots of going on, convoy attacked by enemy aircraft and E boats but were driven off without damage.

***Sunday June 11th, 1944** - Went into Portsmouth but couldn't get ashore. Lots of ships in this place. Went right back out on patrol.

***Monday June 12th, 1944** - Still on patrol. Pretty quiet. Hundreds of aircraft over today, started back into port but turned back out again, sub reported on surface. Made a hedgehog attack on what was supposed to be a sub but we did not get it.

***Tuesday June 13th, 1944** - Still pretty quiet and foggy today, went back in to Portsmouth tonight for a rest.