

Hazardous Task Done By Corvettes

Canadian Ships Escorted Portable Harbors Across Channel

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LONDON, Eng., Oct. 18.—Those two portable harbors which were towed across the English Channel this summer to make possible handling of millions of men and shiploads of supplies for the Allied armies of liberation in France, go there because of eight sea-wise Canadian corvettes.

WELL PROTECTED

When it was first decided to take these enormous jig-saw puzzles of cement and steel to France, high-ranking naval officers realized that they would have to be well protected when they made the hazardous channel crossing. So they asked for these Canadian corvettes: the Regina, Camrose, Alberni, Prescott, Mayflower, Calgary, Rimouski and Drumheller.

All had years of convoy experience behind them.

They needed every bit of skill, courage and stamina they possessed for this particular job.

The huge sections of steel and concrete which made up the floating harbors had to move slowly. This left them extremely vulnerable to enemy attack.

TWO SHIPS LOST

The price was heavy. The Regina was the first to go, with the loss of most of her crew, and the Alberni followed soon after, sinking in something like three seconds.

But not one section of the floating harbors was lost.

Describing the trips across the channel at abnormally reduced speed, Lt.-Comm. W. J. McIsaac of Charlottetown said it consisted of feeling their way slowly and carefully like strangers in a blacked-out city. But things speeded up, he added, whenever attack threatened.

HEADED OFF ATTACKS

On several occasions the sturdy little corvettes raced full out to head off attacks from German E-boats and U-boats. On other occasions they bucked and dodged at high speed while throwing anti-aircraft fire at German planes.

Helping the Canadian corvettes through the operation were even smaller Canadian minesweepers. These craft, including Milltown, Minas, Malpeque, Wasage and Blairmore, did an excellent job and besides clearing the sea lanes right to the French coast they also joined with the corvettes in fighting off intruders.