

# Prairie Sons Make Naval History

## Tars From West Lead Canada on Per Capita Basis

Ottawa, March 26. — From the driest of Canadian dry land — the Western prairies — come more sailors proportionately than from Canada as a whole.

The Western plains, once famed for their wheat production, are gaining a new fame from the exploits of their men and the service they are giving in the Royal Canadian Navy.

From the beginning of the war the fact that many Canadian landlubbers who had never seen the sea or been within 1,000 miles of a sea-going ship were joining the navy aroused interested comment among naval men throughout the empire.

Now the navy has collected statistics on the subject, and, said naval headquarters, the phenomenon is even more startling than was first supposed.

Only about 28 per cent of Canada's population live in the four Western Provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, but from that 28 per cent has come 40 per cent of strength of the navy, 19,000 out of 52,000 men; and from the three Prairie Provinces, with about 21 per cent of Canada's population, has come about 24 per cent of the navy's strength.

### Special Fascination.

The navy's explanation is that the sea holds a special fascination for the man who lives inland. It spells romance and adventure. Lads born in the interior had read tales of the sea and longed to travel on its waters. Their only hope of doing so, however, lay in some day achieving



a degree of wealth and independence which made travel possible.

Then came the war and the navy called for recruits. That meant opportunity. Inland men were given not only a chance to go to the sea, but would be paid for it and would have also the chance of serving their country and perhaps winning distinction.

The navy had a recruiting and training organization scattered across the country in the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve divisions and since the doors were opened the recruits have come along regularly.

At their local barracks inlandmen learn to talk the language of the sea. They call the floor the "deck" and the walls the "bulkheads" during their basic training which lasts eight weeks.

By the time they arrive at the coast for more intensive training and their first glimpse of the sea

the "terra firma tars" are reasonably at home in their new environment.

Some 80 decorations already won by men of the Western Provinces in ships of the Canadian and Royal Navies add further statistical evidence to their important role in the sea war.

Men of British Columbia lead the list with more than 50 decorations which include three Orders of the British Empire, three medals of the British Empire, five British Empire medals (military division), four Distinguished Service Orders, seven Distinguished Service Crosses, four Distinguished Service Medals, 25 Mention in Despatches and three Polish Crosses of Valor.

Manitoba has nine, including two D.S.O.'s and seven Mentions. Saskatchewan men have been awarded one M.B.E., one D.S.M., and five Mentions, while Alberta men have won three Mention in Despatches.

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