

CHANNEL SWEEP FREE OF MINES FOR D-DAY PATH

Lieut. Donald Purdy Gives Description of Role Played By Navy in Invasion Drama

Some of the marvels of the tremendous planning and air coverage for D-day were remarked upon by Lieut. Donald Purdy, who is home on furlough from duties with the R.C.N.V.R. He was serving at that time aboard a Canadian minesweeper, the Canso. He spoke of the fine work done in the whole operation.

The planning was on so broad a scale as to be staggering and those having individual parts as units were but part of a great scheme carefully worked out to fit into a complete picture. The air coverage was described as "marvellous" and was preceded by heavy pounding along the coast on several nights before the invasion, which weakened the German morale and added to the surprise of the invasion.

His ship was part of a Royal Navy flotilla, which swept a pathway across the Channel. This pathway was used by the United States troops.

The duties of this particular assignment were known as "darning." This is marking a pathway by the use of buoys, after the mines have been cleared.

When the space referred to was cleared, the unit then proceeded to the French coast to clear an area for the larger battle craft to come in and give the attacking ground troops full support of gunfire from the ships. When his unit cleared its prescribed area it stood back and had a picture of the whole show, which he found very impressive.

The following day German aircraft were found dropping mines in the cleared area and kept at this for some time and the duty of the sweeper was to keep this area cleared.

Lieut. Purdy is a graduate of McMaster University and well-known in Y.M.C.A. circles, where he assisted as a voluntary instructor. He was a physical training instructor at Memorial and Cannon street public schools and immediately before joining the navy was doing this work in Ottawa.

This background would explain why he took such pride in the fact he was a member of the basketball team from his ship, the Canso, which won the R.C.N. sea-going championship by defeating a team from the H.M.C.S. Prince Robert, which was the only defeat suffered by the latter team.

Lieut. Purdy is visiting his mother, Mrs. F. E. Purdy, 184 Napier street. His wife, the former Ruth Freeman, of Ottawa, to whom he was married last February, is here with him.

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