

A NAVAL OCCASION.

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Issue: 1008..25..10..1940.
Title: Eagle & Hawk,
Track: Young Eagles..Bamba's Attack. Carnival Overture.
Discs: 404.555.314.529.343.
Lines: Stagg.
Voice: do.

Amongst a convoy of liners and merchant ships, it is now revealed by the Admiralty, British sailors travelled to a Canadian port to take over the American destroyers. Coastal Command aircraft escorted the convoy part way over the Atlantic. Following naval custom, divine service was held on the first Sunday the crews were at sea. Some time before the men sailed it had been rumoured that the United States were about to transfer the destroyers; yet the departure was successfully kept secret, and so heavily escorted was the convoy - both by flying-boats and warships - that the Nazis had only a million-to-one chance of attacking it. There was a holiday atmosphere even about the daily P.T. exercises. Autumn in the North Atlantic isn't a bit like being in the tropics. It's a case of anything to keep warm.

The Western Ocean pulled out some of its dirtiest weather as the ships neared Canada. Escorting destroyers cut through the great rollers and every ship in the convoy was taking it green day and night. At great speed the vessels pushed on, and at last they came under a lee shore into the calm waters near harbour. A Canadian port was the destination of the convoy - which particular port Admiralty censorship does not permit us to reveal. An inspiring fleet of tankers and merchant ships was there ready to sail with war-cargoes for Britain. The U.S. destroyers had already been sent to the Dominion. The liners in which the men crossed the Atlantic were docked and in style Jack Tar went ashore and marched behind the band.

Metaphorically the Fleet was in port - but strictly on business, girls.

The American destroyers were tied up at the dockside. Formalities were over. All were ready for Jack Tar to take possession. Efficiently, without fuss, the men of each crew boarded their appointed ship and saluted their new quarter deck.

(Continued over-leaf)

A NAVAL OCCASION / (Continued)

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When all were aboard the order was given to hoist the White Ensign. From now on the ships were on the strength of the Royal Navy. There was steam in the boilers. No time was wasted. There's a war on. These craft were needed in European waters. At the earliest possible second they cast off. The voyage East was begun.

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There were no liners to take them home. Jack was now in his real element again - at sea in a man-o'-war. Perhaps not quite in his element as yet, for these were unaccustomed ships; everything about them a little different from British destroyers. In a heavy sea, by the look of their lines, they'd roll a bit. Excuse the word bit.

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Orders were signalled to hold gun-tests. Each gun on every ship was fired once on the homeward voyage. At the first opportunity the men were getting the feel of the new ships and everything about them.

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Torpedo tubes were swung round. Nobody knew how soon they might be needed in action. By sundown on the first day out the crews were at home with everything on board.

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Just as there had been no enemy attack on the outward trip, so there was none on the voyage home. The destroyers are now on service. By the statesmanlike, courageous action of the American Government fifty very welcome men-o'-war have reinforced the Royal Navy.

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