

EPIC OF THE "JERVIS BAY"

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Thirty-four ships are safe, of the thirty-eight that were attacked in convoy by a German battleship. That they are not all at the bottom of the Atlantic is due to the great valour of the Captain and crew of the armed merchant-cruiser "Jervis Bay." When these ships sighted the raider Captain Fegen ordered the convoy to disperse and drop smoke-boxes, while he himself went full-ahead straight at the German. Outgunned, outranged, the Jervis Bay fought for over an hour, time enough for officers of the merchantmen to get their ships out of harm's way. They all knew that Captain Fegen had gone to certain death.

Most of the convoyed ships did what they could by firing their own guns. The seventeen-thousand ton New Zealand liner, Rangitiki docked at a West Country port, - largest ship in the convoy. Captain Barnett told the thrilling story of how shells burst all round him. Stewardesses bore the ordeal as bravely as the sailors. So did the passengers, though shell-splinters flew over the decks and they expected a direct hit any second. When they heard that the valiant commander of the Jervis Bay had been posthumously awarded the V.C. all declared that he had displayed cool courage of the highest order. Thirty-four ships still afloat testify to his valour.

While such men serve the navy the convoys defy the worst the enemy can do. We shall win because we command the seas; we command the seas because of such heroic men as Captain Fegan, V. C.
