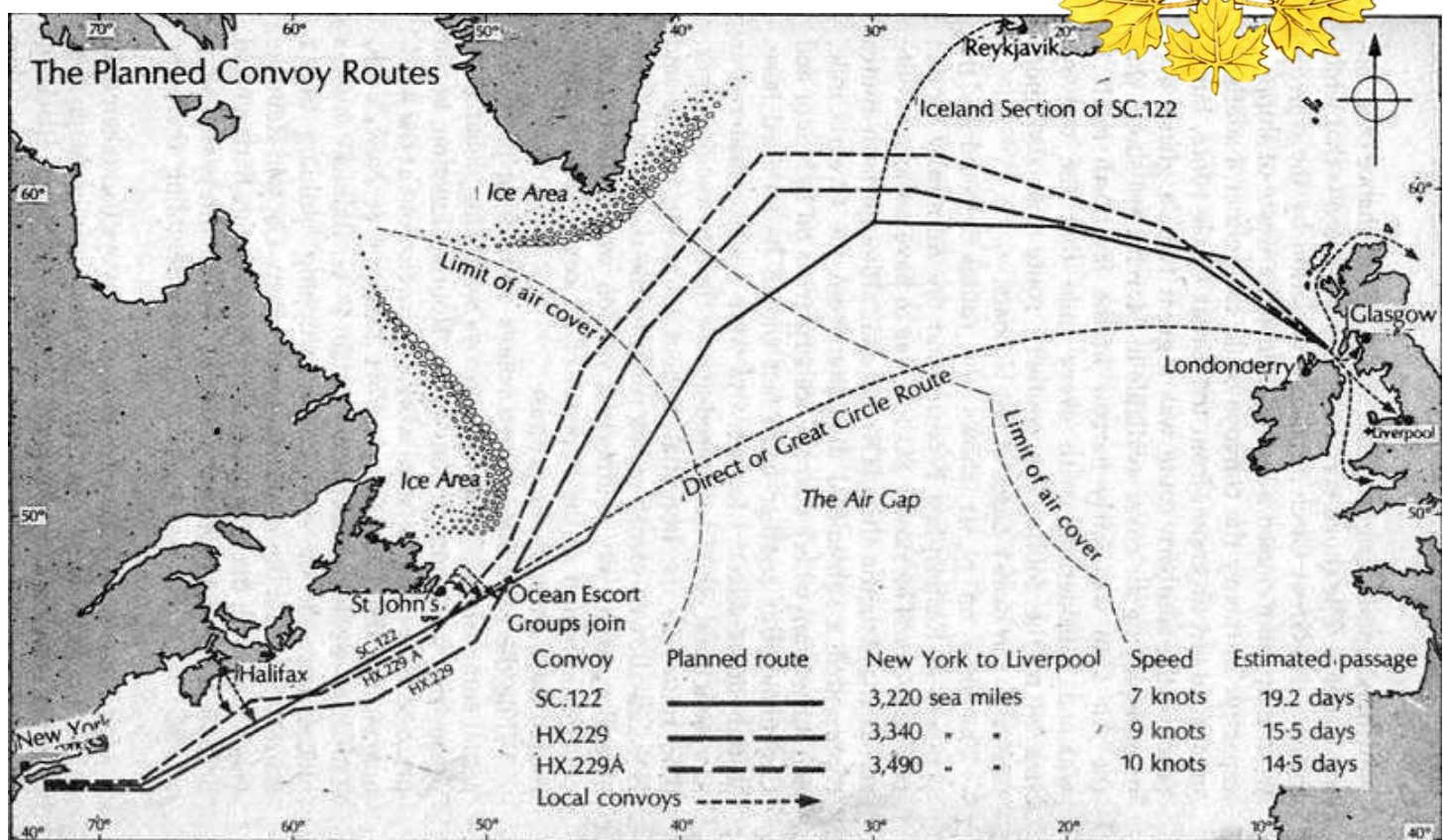


Canadians and the Convoy System

Question: How do Grade Nines navigate the halls of WDHS during the first days of school?

Why?



After France had been knocked out of the Second World War by Nazi Germany, Britain, Canada, and the rest of the Commonwealth were all alone against the Third Reich. Keeping the supply lines open to the British Isles became the number one priority of the war — if the British people ran out of supplies, all of Western Europe would fall to the Nazi forces.

At the beginning of the war, the German navy possessed only 57 boats, of which only 27 were of types that could reach the Atlantic from their home bases (Kommodore (commodore) Karl Dönitz said that 300 U-boats would be needed to wage an effective war against the Allies. Only in the second half of 1941 did U-boat numbers begin to rise.¹

¹ "Battle of the Atlantic." Canadians At Arms, July 19, 2020. <https://canadiansatarms.ca/battle-of-the-atlantic/>.

One of Canada's primary roles in Second World War was to provide Britain with supplies. **The Royal Canadian Navy was instrumental in sending, and protecting, ships filled with supplies to keep Britain in the war against Germany.**

The German U-boat (submarine) Fleet was inflicting heavy tolls on ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Traveling together in groups — called wolfpacks — the German U-boats were inflicting heavy losses on ships traveling to Britain. **The Germans were trying to starve the British out of the war.**

After France fell in 1940 the German's called the operations in the Atlantic Ocean "The Happy Time" from June 1940 - February 1941 — the supply ships were sitting ducks.

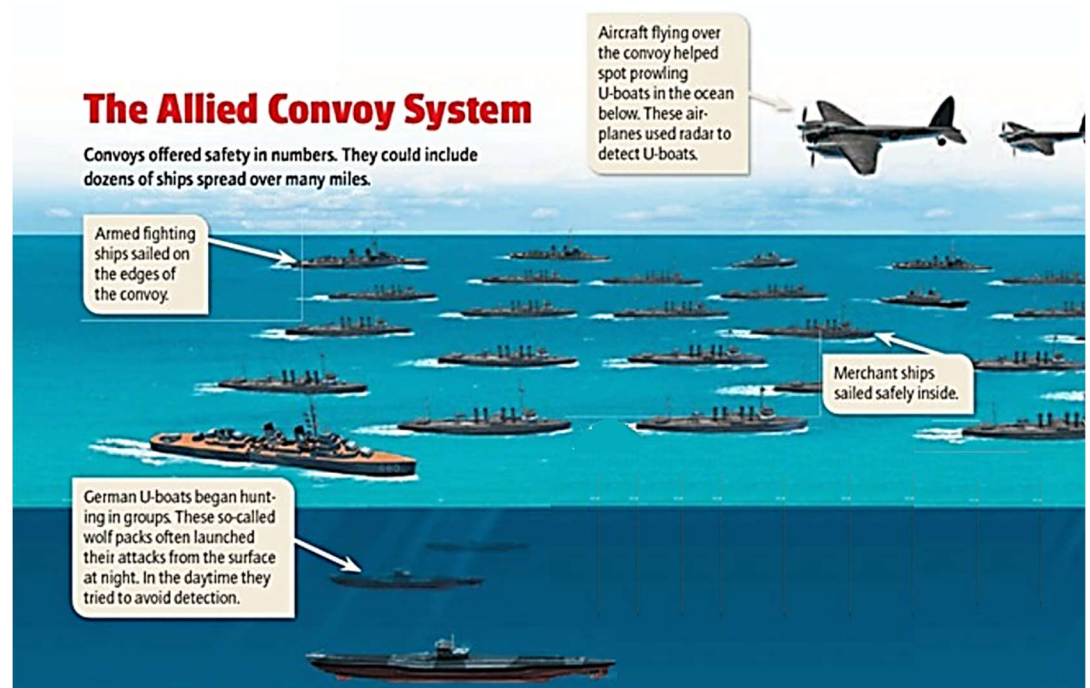
In 1942 the *Battle of the St. Lawrence* began as shipping was attacked along the St. Lawrence River in Canada. From 1942-44, Fifteen German submarines penetrated the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River. Eight these submarines torpedoed twenty-one merchant ships and five warships, of which four were Canadian and one was American.²

To protect the supply ships, the Royal Canadian Navy employed the **Convoy System**.

A convoy was a huge collection of supply ships, heavily guarded by escorts (usually Canadian destroyers and/or corvettes) that traveled together as they crossed the Atlantic.

Did You Know?

The Royal Canadian Navy began the war with 13 vessels, of which 6 were destroyers, and 3,500 personnel, and ended it with **the third largest navy in the world**. At war's end the RCN had 373 fighting ships and over 110,000 members, all of whom were volunteers, including 6,500 women who served in the *Women's Royal Canadian Naval Services*.



² Kirouac, André. "The Summer of 1943: An Episode in the Battle of the St. Lawrence River – Surveillance, Defence and Propaganda." *The Summer of 1943: An Episode in the Battle of the St. Lawrence River – Surveillance, Defence and Propaganda* - Canadian Military Journal. Government of Canada, National Defence, Canadian Defence Academy, March 20, 2006. <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo7/no1/history-histoire-01-eng.asp>.



HMCS Sackville docked in Halifax. Photographed by Bill Jarvis in 2014.

What the *Flower-class corvette*?

A *corvette* is a type of small warship used by the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War. *Corvettes* were quick to manufacture for the Atlantic convoys, and Canada produced dozens of them in their effort to protect goods destined for the British Isles.

They were not comfortable to travel in, but *Corvettes* were fast and easy to maneuver. Perhaps Canada's most famous *corvette* was [HMCS Sackville](#), now a naval memorial and national historic site.

Flower class Corvette		
	1939-1940	Revised, 1941-1944
Length	62.5 m	63.4 m
Width	10 m	10 m
Displacement	950 tonnes	970 tonnes
Maximum Speed	16 knots	16 knots
Armament	One 4-inch (100 mm) gun at the fore, Two .50-caliber machine gunsTwo Lewis .303-caliber machine-guns40 depth charges, launchers on both sides, rail at the stern	One 4-inch (100 mm) gun at the fore,One 2-pound pom-pom gun Two Oerlikon 20-mm guns, 70 depth charges, launchers on both sides, rails at the sternOne Hedgehog
Crew	5 officers, 70 men	7 officers, 80 men

Information from www.junobeach.org

Burlington's Royal Canadian Naval Ships Memorial Monument



From the [website](#):

The Royal Canadian Naval Association Burlington Branch, unveiled the Monument, May 14, 1995, with approximately 5,000 spectators, including over 1,000 veterans in attendance. The memorial is dedicated to the memory of the 31 warships and the 2024 Naval Personnel of the Royal Canadian Navy and the 75 ships and 1466 merchant seamen of the Canadian Merchant Navy who were lost during the Second World War.

The monument has three components. The main component is the memorial cairn listing on the front face the names of 31 war ships of the Royal Canadian Navy and the date they were lost. Also, shown is the lost 2024 Naval Personnel and 1466 Merchant Seamen.

The second component, topping the cairn, is a six-foot bronze statue of a Canadian Seaman in the rig of the day saluting his lost shipmates (titled "The Salute").

The main remembrance wall along the rear of the monument lists all the warships that served in the Royal Canadian Navy. On the rear of the remembrance wall are listed the names of the 370 ships that served in the Canadian Merchant Army. The bell of *HMCS Burlington* is mounted atop the centre column of the ships remembrance wall.