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Directorate of History
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R E P O R T NO. 30
HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)
ARMY HEADQUARTERS

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AUTHORITY: DHD 3-12
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18 Nov 49

ARMY PARTICIPATION IN MEASURES TAKEN BY
THE THREE SERVICES FOR THE SECURITY OF
THE GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE AND THE LOWER
RIVER DURING THE PERIOD OF GERMAN
SUBMARINE ACTIVITY, 1942-45

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the Period of German Submarine Activity,
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1. This report deals with the special measures taken by the Army to safeguard the civil population and vital installations in the Lower St. Lawrence region as a result of the incursion of enemy submarines into the Gulf and River in 1942. In addition the interservice aspect of the defence preparations is noted and a brief account given of the plans of the naval and air services. The period covered is from the commencement of submarine activity in the Gulf in 1942 to the conclusion of hostilities in the Western Atlantic in 1945.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

2. In 1941 the German U-boats, which had hitherto confined their operations principally to the areas surrounding the British Isles, commenced to extend their activities further west. As a result during this latter year escorts for ocean convoys became necessary for the whole period of passage. By December 1941, however, largely as a result of the decision of the United States Government to participate in the western ocean escort for east-bound and west-bound convoys, the enemy had been forced out of the Western Atlantic. Even in the waters in and out of the Mediterranean where he then concentrated the bulk of his U-boat force he met with little success. (Royal Canadian Navy Monthly Review (R.C.N.M.R.) No. 9, September 1942; Schull, Joseph "The Far Distant Ships - Canada's Navy in the Second World War", Chap 5, pp 1-4 (ms))

3. On 7 December, however, Japanese forces struck at Pearl Harbour, and at once the whole perspective of the war was changed. The Allied powers had now to re-distribute their already strained naval resources to cover the new areas in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, where their shipping lay open to the menace of air and submarine attack. The effect was immediately felt on the North Atlantic. There the Royal and U.S. Navies greatly reduced their strengths; the latter to such an extent that by February 1942 it had only two coastguard cutters on escort duty in the Western Atlantic. The enemy reacted promptly and effectively to the new situation. In January his U-boats launched heavy attacks in the coastal waters of the United States between Nova Scotia and the West Indies. (Schull, pp 14-15)

4. It was inevitable that with enemy submarines continually present in American coastal waters attacks would occur in the St. Lawrence, the broad waters of which led straight to the heart of Canada. For the moment there was little that could be done; of necessity the St. Lawrence traffic, valuable though it was, had to take second place to the ocean convoys, and to the oil tankers in the Caribbean and along the American coast. Nevertheless plans were drawn up for the employment of Quebec - Sydney convoys and the establishment of a naval base at Gaspé for a Gulf escort

force. Consideration was also given to the possibility of having to route overland much of the cargo which normally went by river. R.C.A.F. planners envisaged possible use of the R.C.A.F. stations at Gaspé and Mont Joli for anti-submarine warfare should the enemy enter the gulf and river areas. For the time being, however, flying operations were to be confined to convoy escort and reconnaissance of the approaches to the Gulf. (Schull, pp 17-18; (RCAF) H.Q.S. 22-1-17, General Review and Report upon Defences in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence Areas by a Committee formed under Direction of the Chiefs of Staff Committee)

5. The expected attack came on the night 12/13 May when a submarine torpedoed and sank two merchant ships between Anticosti Island and the mouth of the river. * (See Appendix "A" and Map at Appendix "B"): The Navy at once brought into effect its plan "GL 2", which consisted of putting all ocean-going ships in convoy in the St. Lawrence, using Sydney and the anchorage at Bic Island as convoy assembly points. ** The escorts for these convoys consisted of five groups, each comprising one corvette, two Bangor class anti-submarine minesweepers, and one armed yacht. These vessels were based at Gaspé, and operated by the Naval Officer-in-Charge (N.O.I.C.) Gaspé. *** (H.Q.S. 9027: Naval aspect of the defence of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence)

6. At the same time, the R.C.A.F. despatched aircraft to its stations at Mont Joli and Gaspé, and commenced employing some of the aircraft from the North Sydney station in sorties over the Gulf. The total of aircraft involved in these activities varied throughout the 1942 shipping season. Bomber reconnaissance aircraft (Hudsons) operating from Mont Joli numbered up to six, from Chatham, N.B., two to five, and from Sydney one squadron. Besides these, two to four Canso flying boats operated from Gaspé, and two to six from North Sydney. For convoys in the Strait of Belle Isle and that part of the Gulf lying north of a line from Bay of Islands, Newfoundland, to Cape Whittle, Quebec, air coverage was provided from Botwood in Newfoundland. In addition the R.C.A.F. requested the R.C.N. to route its Quebec - Sydney convoys south of the Magdalen Islands to take advantage of the intensified air coverage afforded by the training flights out of Summerside and Charlottetown, P.E.I. (Ibid: Air Aspect of the Defence of the Gulf and the River St. Lawrence)

* For a popular account of the sinkings see article by J. McNaught entitled "The Battle of the St. Lawrence" in the 15 Oct and 1 Nov 49 issues of McLean's magazine.

** This was a plan drawn up by the Naval Staff in March 1942. It was a revision of an earlier plan (GL 1) made in 1940. (R.C.N.M.R. No. 17), May 1943: St. Lawrence Convoys and Their Protection.

*** In 1940 both the R.C.N. and R.C.A.F. established bases at Gaspé, the latter a temporary one for flying boats (H.Q.S. 9027: Air Aspect of the Defence of the Gulf and the River St. Lawrence; R.C.N.M.R. No. 16, April 1943: Gaspé - The Story of a Base).

ARMY - DEFENCE POLICY AND GENERAL DISPOSITIONS 1942

7. The sinkings brought the war very close to the inhabitants of the Gaspé Peninsula and, as might be expected, there was an immediate outcry for increased defence measures. In the House of Commons on the 15th Mr. J.S. Roy, the member for Gaspé, stated that he had some information relating to this matter that he wished to impart in a secret session. In reply Mr. King suggested that Mr. Roy divulge the information to the Minister of National Defence for Naval Services so as to enable the Government to reach a decision as to what further steps were necessary. (House of Commons Debates: 1942 Session, p. 2470). On the same day Mr. Roy wrote to Mr. Ralston setting forth a number of criticisms of the lower St. Lawrence Defences (H.Q.S. 3544-A Vol 2: Mr. J.S. Roy to Rt. Hon J.L. Ralston, 15 May 42). In a reply dated 2 Jun Mr. Ralston pointed out that Mr. Roy's remarks applied chiefly to the naval and air arms, but as regards local ground defences the army policy was that "...we are making intensive efforts to have the citizens recognize that this is their obligation and a contribution which can be made by those who are not physically fit or of an age to enable them to join the Active Army" (ibid: Mr. Ralston to Mr. Roy, 2 Jun 42). The Minister bespoke the aid of the Gaspé Member in making the Active Army as strong and representative as possible, and in building up the Reserve Army into a sound line of defence in Canadian territory. He pointed out there were already both Active and Reserve Army units in the area, but cautioned, however, that

...it should be kept in mind in considering the defence of Gaspé area, that it is included in our general plan for the defence of the coast, in which plan all three armed services, Naval, Military, and Air, have their part. In this connection it will be understood by you that it is not sound, in so far as the Army is concerned, to scatter our forces in small isolated groups through different localities to an unreasonable extent. Especially is this so when much of the work to be performed can better be accomplished by Naval and Air operations. Therefore, the general scheme is to maintain mobile reserves of the Army in suitable areas available for despatch to threatened points. *

(Ibid)

On the 18th the Prime Minister advised the House that the information conveyed by Mr. Roy to the Minister was not considered by the Cabinet to be of such a nature as to warrant a secret sitting. (House of Commons Debates: 1942 Session, p. 2500)

8. At the beginning of May, Active Army units in the Gaspé Peninsula consisted of three coast defence batteries at Gaspé operating in counter-bombardment, examination, and close defence and support roles respectively, and personnel of 55 C.A. (B) T.C. at Rimouski. These latter troops, however, were still in the first two months of basic training, and were thus not at the time suitable for use in an operational role. Active Forces on the north shore of the river consisted of a company of the Veterans Guard of Canada

* The mobile reserves on the East Coast were at Debert, N.S. and Sussex, N.B.

engaged in security duties at Arvida on the Saguenay, and at Valcartier three recently mobilized battalions of 15 Inf Bde and personnel of 13 C.I.T.C.; the latter capable of providing up to two companies for an operational role. The Reserve Army comprised 2 (R) Bn Fus du St L. at Rimouski, less two companies, one each at Rivière du Loup and Mont Joli, and 82 Fd Bty R.C.A. at Gaspé. Reserve Army on the north shore of the river was represented by 1 (R) Bn R. du Sag with its Headquarters at Chicoutimi and one company at Arvida. On 16 May, on orders from Headquarters Atlantic Command, one company of Ir R.C. moved into the defended port of Gaspé as infantry garrison. * In so far as the islands in the Gulf were concerned, the Army policy was that their protection was best provided by the Naval and Air Forces operating in the Gulf area. (H.Q.S. 3544-A Vol 2: Memorandum by Maj-Gen Murchie for the Minister, 18 Jul 42, and unsigned Memorandum for the Minister, 18 Jul 42; ** H.Q.S. 9027 Vol 2: D.O.C., M.D. No. 5, to Secretary, Department of National Defence, 28 May 43)

9. On 20 May Maj-Gen W.H.P. Elkins, who as G.O.C.-in-C. Atlantic Command exercised operational control over the whole of the East Coast Defences, paid a personal visit to the Gaspé area to assess the general defence situation (W.D., H.Q. Atlantic Command, 20 May 42). On the basis of this visit and from discussions with the Air Officer Commanding, Eastern Air Command, and the Commanding Officer, Atlantic Coast, the G.O.C.-in-C. informed N.D.H.Q. on the 26th that he considered the Naval and Air dispositions which had been or were being made were adequate. As an additional measure he was, however, making arrangements for a small reconnaissance detachment from 4 Cdn Armd Div to stand by to move to Mont Joli for patrol duty should the situation deteriorate, (H.Q.S. 3544-A Vol 4: Tel G.O.C.-in-C., At Comd, to C.G.S., 26 May 42)

10. Although the Government and service heads might feel confident of the soundness and correctness of the defence measures, the inhabitants of the threatened area, thinking in terms of their lives and personal property, were far from being satisfied. Through their press and their leaders they continued to agitate for stronger defences. Public anxiety was further increased in July when a fresh outbreak of sinkings occurred in the St. Lawrence area. On the night of the 5th/6th, four ships in a Quebec-Sydney convoy were sunk about eight miles off Cap Chat (R.C.N.M.R. No. 7, p.11)

11. On the 10th, Brigadier Vanier, D.O.C. M.D. No. 5, wrote N.D.H.Q. that information had reached him to the effect

* The warning order for this move was issued by Atlantic Command on 12 May 42 and possibly prior to the commencement of the submarine attacks. (W.D., H.Q. Atlantic Command, May 1942; Appx 5)

** These papers were probably prepared for use by the Minister at a secret session of the House held that morning dealing with the question of coastal defences of Canada. (See House of Commons Debates: 1942 Session, p.4376)

that the people along the Gaspé coast were greatly worried about the possibility of parties being landed from enemy submarines to kill or carry off as hostages the inhabitants of the more isolated communities. The D.O.C. stated:

Although I am not responsible for its protection and security, I feel bound in conscience to recommend that a motorized column, not necessarily large in numbers, should be established at once in some centralized place of the Gaspé Peninsula from which it could radiate to the long stretches of the coast which are completely open and undefended. For instance, from Matane to Gaspé there is a distance of 210 miles completely open and without railway communication. This motorized column could send out patrols, particularly at night.

I am very concerned about this matter and recommend that it be given urgent attention.

(H.Q.S. 8655-1 Vol 3: Brigadier Vanier to Secretary D.N.D., 10 Jul 42)

12. On 15 Jul Brigadier Vanier's suggestion was passed by N.D.H.Q. to G.O.C.-in-C. Atlantic Command with a request for his views. On the following day H.Q. Atlantic Command issued orders to Commander Gaspé Defences to make a platoon of the infantry garrison available as a motorized detachment to patrol along the coast between Cap des Rosiers and Ste. Anne des Monts. Then on the 17th General Elkins' Headquarters ordered H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Div to despatch the patrol placed on short notice earlier (see para 9) to Mont Joli, from where it was to operate between Bic and Cap Chat; next day a motor platoon from Lake Sup R. departed from Debert, N.S. for Mont Joli to carry out this task. (W.D.: H.Q. Atlantic Command, 16-17 Jul 42; W.D., Lake Sup R., 17-18 Jul 42). In a letter to the Secretary D.N.D. on the 18th, General Elkins wrote:

I feel it desirable to indicate at this time that my policy of maintaining special units such as the one presently on route to Mont Joli and the reserve platoon at Gaspé does not envisage defence at all points where a small enemy landing may take place, nor does it visualize any different treatment to that available for the many miles of coastline common to Atlantic Command which has for some time been subject to such a threat. Under the present scale of attack I must rely on watching agencies and activities in the other services for information, and have troops available for as rapid movement as possible to any area where defence measures do not exist, and I consider it desirable to occupy temporarily or to make recce therefrom.

(H.Q.S. 8655-1 Vol 3: G.O.C.-in-C. Atlantic Command to Secretary D.N.D., 18 Jul 42)

13. What the Gaspeians wanted, and what the Active Army was neither willing nor able to supply, was immediate protection against hit and run raids. As Mr. Ralston had pointed out in his letter to Mr. Roy, the answer to this problem lay in the recognition by the citizens of their obligation for self-protection through the medium of the Reserve Army. Towards this end M.D. No. 5 commenced an

intensive recruiting programme for the Reserve Army in the Gaspé Peninsula. The programme got under way in September 1942 after visits to the south shore communities by Reserve and Active Commanders. The result was gratifying and, with the co-operation of the clergy and other leading elements in the community, a number of detachments were rapidly recruited. By 18 Nov Brigadier Vanier was able to report to N.D.H.Q. that some 1500 recruits had been enrolled in four supernumerary companies of 2 (R) Bn Fus du St L. At that time, however, these troops were without arms and had had no training, and suffered from a shortage of boots, trousers, overshoes, and gloves. Furthermore, the problem of training and administering these supernumerary units promised to be a heavy one for whereas the normal recruiting territory of the 2 (R) Bn was broad enough, including as it did the Matapedia Valley, Mont Joli, Matane, Rimouski, Rivière-du-Loup, and Cabane, the supernumerary detachments were scattered over a great distance along the Gaspé coast from Ste. Anne des Monts to St. Jean L'Évangéliste, west of the port of Gaspé. On top of this communications were very poor. For these reasons it would be necessary to recruit officers and N.C.Os. locally and to provide additional A. & T. Staffs from the Active Army. (H.Q.S. 9027: D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 to the Secretary D.N.D. 26 Nov 42; Report on Defences in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence Areas by Meeting held at Quebec City on 26-27 Mar 43)

14. These matters were studied at Ottawa, and on 14 Dec N.D.H.Q. informed H.Q. M.D. No. 5 that authority had been granted for the organization of an additional reserve battalion of Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent to be known as 3 (R) Bn. The new unit would be formed from the four supernumerary companies recently recruited, and would have its headquarters at Gaspé. Its recruiting area would extend along the coast from Ste. Anne des Monts to Matapedia. At the same time instructions were issued for the immediate despatch to M.D. No. 5 of 1000 .30/06 Enfield rifles and 200 Sten guns with the necessary training ammunition. Special teams of instructors from the Active Army were to be organized to carry out the training of the new units during the winter months. (Ibid: C.G.S. to D.O.C. M.D. No. 5, 14 Dec 42)

INTERSERVICE PLANNING FOR THE 1943 SHIPPING SEASON

15. On 16 Dec the last ship departed for sea from Montreal, and the 1942 shipping season came to a close (Canada Year Book 1948-49, p.717). Since the submarine attacks first began in May, 21 ships had been sunk in the Strait of Belle Isle, the Gulf, and in the river as far up as Metis. Shipping in the Gulf and river areas had been on a greatly reduced scale since October as a result of the provision by the R.C.N. of 17 corvettes from the coastal convoy forces for use in the North African invasion. ((RCAF) H.Q.S. 22-1-17: General Review and Report upon Defences in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence Areas by a Committee formed under the Direction of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 30 Jan 43)

16. Planning for the 1943 shipping season was already under way. On 9 Dec an Inter-Service Committee, set up under the Direction of the Chiefs of Staff Committee "to prepare a general review of the defence of the Gulf of St. Lawrence against submarine attack and the detection and dealing with people attempting to land", held its first meeting.

(H.Q.S. 9027: Minutes of a Meeting held at R.C.A.F. Headquarters, Lisgar Bldg., on Defence of Gulf of St. Lawrence at 1100 hours, 9 Dec 42) By the end of January this Committee had reviewed the situation and prepared a general report for the Chiefs of Staff Committee. (General Review and Report op cit)

17. The Committee anticipated that in view of the present world situation there would be no change in the approved forms and scales of attacks against the east coast, and that ample warning might be expected of any considerable change. * This condition, however, did not apply to U-boat warfare in the North Atlantic; in fact, there was every reason to believe that Germany would increase its efforts to cut the Atlantic supply routes. In 1942 as many as 115 enemy submarines were operating in the North Atlantic at one stage. The German U-boat construction programme, which currently was producing 20 submarines a month, was being stepped up and it was plain that the enemy intended making his undersea campaign a major effort in 1943. It followed, therefore, that increased activity along the Atlantic coast and in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence areas might be expected. Furthermore it was possible that the enemy might vary his tactics and include mining operations and the shelling of shore establishments. (Ibid)

18. During the 1943 season the R.C.N. planned to dispose 71 craft, chiefly corvettes, Bangor Class Minesweepers, and motor launches, in the Gulf area, as against the 41 it had in operation there as of September 1942. In addition the naval plan called for the banning of all shipping from the Gulf except for essential coastwise traffic, and that required for the movement of vital ore supplies from Greenland and Newfoundland. Organized convoys were to be operated between Quebec and Sydney, Quebec and Labrador, and Sydney and Newfoundland, and escorted by Corvettes and Bangors. A number of Fairmile motor launches would also be available for escort duties. Apart from the escort forces a striking force of Fairmiles would be based at Gaspé from where they would operate in co-operation with the R.C.A.F. anti-submarine aircraft. (Ibid; General Review and Report upon Defences op cit; Naval Aspect of Defence of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, 11 Dec 42)

19. The R.C.A.F. also proposed to strengthen its forces operating over the Gulf area during 1943. The intention was to increase the number of aircraft available from the 1942 figure of 307, which included 259 from the training establishment, to 481, including 386 training aircraft. In addition, a new base was to be organized at Seven Islands. (General Review and Report upon Defences)

20. For its part, the Army intended by spring to have completed the organization and equipment of the Reserve Army

* The scale of attack at this time could be summarized as bombardment by a capital ship; one or two 8" cruisers; or by a merchant raider mounting 6" guns; attack by submarine and small surface craft; attack by small raiding parties; torpedo, bomb or gas attack by shipborne or long-range shore based aircraft on seaborne, coastal, and inland objectives ((H.S.) 321.016(D1) : Atlantic Command Operation Instruction No. 7B, 13 Feb 43).

units in the Lower St. Lawrence area, and to have brought their **training** to the point where they could be entrusted with their operational roles of local defence, coast watching, and detection of suspicious persons. As organization and training progressed, increasing emphasis would be placed on the secondary role of coast watching and detection of suspicious persons. It was recognized that prompt information on submarine sightings, unusual happenings, and the movements of suspicious persons was of vital importance to the other services and the R.C.M.P., and it was considered, therefore, that the secondary role might be of more immediate practical importance for general defence purposes than the first. Active Army dispositions would be the same as in 1942 with the exception that an immediate operational reserve of the strength of an infantry company would be available at 55 C.A. (B) T.C. at Rimouski. * (H.Q.S. 9027: Army Aspects of the Defence of the Gulf and St. Lawrence River, 22 Jan 43; General Review and Report upon Defences)

21. On 2 Feb 43 the Chiefs of Staff Committee approved the report of the special Inter-Service Committee for submission to Defence Council, but recommended that on approval of the plan a meeting be held of representatives of the three Services, R.C.M.P., Provincial Police, and civilian authorities to ensure the co-ordination of all defence activities. The report and the recommendation of the Chiefs of Staff Committee was approved by Defence Council on 5 Feb, and by the Cabinet War Committee on the 18th. (H.Q.S. 22-1-17: Extracts of Minutes of Meeting of Chiefs of Staff Committee held on Tuesday 2 Feb 43; Extract of Minutes of Defence Council Meeting held on Friday 5 Feb 43; Memorandum for Chief of Air Staff from P.S. to the Minister of National Defence (Air), 23 Feb 43)

22. During 26-27 Mar representatives of the three Services, Police and Civil Defence Organization met at Quebec City. As explained by the Chairman, Air Commodore K.M. Guthrie, D/A.M.A.S., ** A.F.H.Q., the purpose of the meeting "was to arrange the details of the best and quickest methods of organizing civil defence measures ... in the lower St. Lawrence districts, and to effect close co-ordination between the activities of the civilian organizations and those of the three fighting services and the Police Forces in these districts (H.Q.S. 9027: Report upon Defences in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence areas by Meeting held at Quebec City on 26-27th March, 1943). Among those attending were Commissioner Marcel Gaboury, of the Quebec Provincial Police, Captain M. Gaurvreau, R.C.N., N.O.I.C. Quebec, Brigadier E.A. Blais, D.O.C., M.D. No. 5, and Col G.E. A. Dupuis, Commander Reserve Army M.D. No. 5 (Ibid)

* In addition 21 Cdn Inf Bde at Valcartier was available during the greater part of the 1943 navigation season for operational use within M.D. No. 5. On 1 Jul this brigade became part of 7 Cdn Div but remained under tactical command of the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5. Early in August one of its battalions, 3 Fus M.R. was moved to Debert, N.S., leaving the brigade disposed with R. de Levis at Rimouski, and 3 R. de Mais and the remainder of the brigade at Valcartier. On 15 Oct the brigade and its units were disbanded. (W.Ds., H.Q. 21 Cdn Inf Bde, July 1943; Appx 5, 21 Cdn Inf Bde Adm Instr No. 1, 31 Jul 43; and 5 Aug and 15 Oct 43)

** Deputy Air Member for Air Staff

23. As a result of its deliberations, which covered a wide range of topics relating to service and civil defence matters, the Quebec Meeting made a number of recommendations for submission by the Chairman to the Interservice Committee at Ottawa. One of the chief matters considered was the work of the Air Detection Corps * and the Civilian Protection Committee (A.R.P.). Both organizations proposed to expand considerably their activities during the summer months, and to this end the meeting recommended that R.C.A.F. and C.P.C. combine their efforts and send out joint A.R.P.-A.D.C. field parties. Further, since the Reserve Army in the Gaspé already contained, and was supported by, the best and most reliable elements in that area, the meeting recommended that every opportunity should be taken to utilize this existing organization in the contemplated expansion of the A.R.P. - A.D.C. coast watching services. The meeting noted the intention of the R.C.A.F. to establish A.D.C. reporting stations at Seven Islands, Mont Joli, and Chatham, in addition to the one already in existence at Gaspé. In this connection both the Army and R.C.A.F. representatives dwelt briefly on the problem of land line communications in the area, and mentioned that improved facilities were being planned, and that work would start as soon as weather conditions permitted. The reserve army reported that in those places where its detachments were located, and where there was no existing telephone system, preparations were being made to operate and man telephones 24 hours a day. Fifteen telephonists were on full time strength of each battalion of Fus du St L. for this purpose. Additionally, a certain number of part time men would be trained as a reserve or to handle the telephone in small hamlets where the line could be run to a store or a post-office in which the reserve army man might reside. Sites had been selected in the Gaspé Peninsula for nine No. 9 wireless sets. These sites had been selected so as to perform the dual purpose of permanent observation post and communication point. (Ibid; H.Q.S. 9027: Report of Officer attending Meeting at Quebec, 26-27 Mar 43)

24. The need of generally educating the public in the broader aspects of the various defence measures either taken or contemplated was stressed by practically every speaker. It was felt that many of the difficulties encountered in obtaining co-operation, for example in enforcing the "dim out", were due to the fact that the public was generally uninformed as to the reasons for the defence measures and as to the way in which it might best assist in assuring that these measures fulfilled their purpose. It was the opinion of Commissioner Gaboury that the civilian population of Quebec could not be bulldozed into defence consciousness but could be led by tactful

* The Aircraft Detection Corps was organized and administered by the Royal Canadian Air Force for the purpose of reporting the presence and/or movements of hostile or unidentified aircraft, suspicious vessels or troops other than those of the United Nations. Such reports were transmitted by established communication systems to the various defence forces so that appropriate action might be taken immediately. (R.C.A.F. Official Handbook for the Aircraft Detection Corps September 1942)

and sensible publicity, the essence of which should be a logical explanation of what the services and civil defence agencies were doing to provide protection for the civilian and how the latter could assist in furthering these plans. In his capacity as Chairman of the Quebec Civilian Protection Committee, Commissioner Gaboury offered to sponsor and supervise generally an educational publicity campaign in the province. Such a publicity campaign, he felt, must originate and flow from Quebec City, for unless it had a strong colloquial flavour, and was directed from inside the province it might do more harm than good. This offer was accepted by the meeting, which recommended that the campaign begin as soon as the A.D.C. - A.R.P. field parties commenced operating. It was further recommended that A.F.H.Q. take immediate steps to set up a liaison office in Quebec City to provide a more direct link between A.O.C. Eastern Air Command and the authorities in Quebec City, as well as the French language press and broadcasting stations. (Report by Meeting held at Quebec City op cit)

25. The recommendations of the Quebec meeting were embodied in a further report of the special inter-service committee, and on 21 Apr submitted to the War Committee of the Cabinet. The War Committee approved the report but suggested that provision be made, preferably by the appointment of an appropriate senior service officer on a full time basis, for supervision and co-ordination of the various activities involved in the implementation of the Quebec proposals. On 5 May the War Committee approved a further submission proposing the appointment of a "defence co-ordination officer", who was to be responsible for investigating and reporting on the progress of defence measures which were the concern of the three services. He was to have access to senior and subordinate service commanders concerned with the defence of the area, and would establish and maintain contact with the appropriate Quebec provincial authorities. He would promptly draw to the attention of the local authorities concerned any defence matters which required remedial action and, where necessary, make recommendations. (H.Q.S. 9027: P.S. to Minister of National Defence to C.G.S. 23 Apr and 17 May 43; 3rd Report on the Defences of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence Areas)

26. On 8 Jun the Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons that the Government had, on the advice of the Chiefs of Staff, appointed Squadron Leader J.P.J. Desloges, R.C.A.F., as Defence Co-ordination Officer for the Gaspé and lower St. Lawrence. S/L Desloges, prior to his appointment to a commission in the R.C.A.F. in October 1937, had been a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He was one of the early Canadian pilots to participate in the Battle of Britain, where he was wounded, losing the sight of an eye in August 1940. After returning to Canada he gave a series of lectures throughout Quebec and as a result was widely known in that province. (H.Q.S. 9027 Vol 2: Draft announcement of S/L Desloges' appointment)

CHANGES IN OPERATIONAL CONTROL IN ATLANTIC COMMAND, WINTER :
1942-43

27. During the winter 1942-43 steps were taken at N.D.H.Q. to decentralize the system of operational control in Atlantic Command. Since August 1940 when Atlantic Command was first set up, the G.O.C.-in-C. had exercised through the fortress commanders, etc. direct operational control of all units which comprised the garrisons of the fortresses, defended ports, and defended areas in M.Ds. 6 and 7, Newfoundland and Labrador, and in that part of M.D. No. 5 lying east of a line drawn through

Cape Chidley (Hudson Strait), the mouth of the Saguenay River, Rivière du Loup, and Edmundston, N.B. Within this area the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 had responsibility only for the training, administration, and maintenance of all units, establishments, and installations not under the direct operational control of Atlantic Command, and for the maintenance of all units under direct operational control of Atlantic Command. (Preliminary (Canadian) Narrative, Chap 7, paras 90 - 92)

28. The position of the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 was an unenviable one. Although he had no say in the defence dispositions in the lower St. Lawrence, he was, as the senior army officer at Quebec City, the one to whom the civil population naturally turned for help and against whom they directed their criticisms. By October 1942 the situation had become so irksome that the then D.O.C., Brigadier G.P. Vanier, wrote to N.D.H.Q. requesting that a public announcement be made to the effect that the G.O.C.-in-C. Atlantic Command and not the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 was the officer responsible for the protection of the Gaspé Peninsula. (H.Q.S. 8655-1 Vol 3: D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 to Secretary D.N.D., 16 Oct 42). N.D.H.Q. referred the matter to General Elkins for a decision, and on 5 Nov the latter wrote to Brigadier Vanier turning down the request on the grounds that operational division of territory was a service matter and "one which as far as the public and press are concerned, has no bearing on the particular subject of their desire for additional defence measures". (Ibid: G.O.C.-in-C., Atlantic Command to D.O.C. M.D. No. 5, 5 Nov 42)

29. Early in December however, the question of operational division of territory again arose at N.D.H.Q. On the morning of the 13th the C.G.S. advised a meeting, held to discuss the defence situation in the Gaspé Peninsula, that he had recently spoken to General Elkins about the general organization of Atlantic Command, and had reached agreement with him to decentralize operational control to the Headquarters of military districts within Atlantic Command. On the same day N.D.H.Q. informed the G.O.C.-in-C. Atlantic Command and the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 that as of 0800 hrs 16 Dec operational command of the Lower St. Lawrence area would pass to the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5. The defended port of Gaspé, however, because of the existing layout of communications, was to remain under direct control of the G.O.C.-in-C. until such time as adequate intercommunications were established.* (H.Q.S. 3544-A, Vol 3, Tel C.G.S. to G.O.C.-in-C., Atlantic Command, 15 Dec 42; Memorandum by C.G.S. for the Minister 13 Dec 42). This meant that henceforth the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 would deal directly with N.D.H.Q. in all operational and administrative matters other than those concerned with the defended port of Gaspé. This decision did not meet with the approval of the G.O.C.-in-C. Atlantic Command, and on 19 Jan 43 he wrote to N.D.H.Q. strongly recommending that the "portion of M.D. 5 previously placed under my command should immediately be again placed under my operational control through D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 with the exception of Arvida and Gaspé which, under the provisions of the telegrams quoted above are now under my tactical control" (ibid, G.O.C.-in-C. Atlantic Command to Secretary D.N.D., 19 Jan 43).

30. General Elkins' position was that, although he had now no direct control of the defences along the eastern coast of

* Tactical Command of the defended port of Gaspé passed to H.Q. M.D. No. 5 on 1 Jul 43 (At Comd File S. 11-5 Vol 2: A.Q.M.G. Memorandum, 5 Jul 43)

Canada from the head of the Bay of Chaleur to the southern end of Labrador, he continued to be responsible for co-ordinating the preparation and execution of the defence plans of the three services for the whole of the eastern coast of Canada and Newfoundland. Should enemy activity develop along the coastline, he would have no information to pass to either of the other two services, although immediate action on both their parts would be necessary. In consequence the situation might arise of enemy activity developing which might come under Army surveillance but of which no report would reach either of the other two services, at any rate only after a considerable time lag and then presumably through N.D.H.Q. General Elkins felt, therefore, that to obtain uniformity of control and speed in the co-ordination of the actions of the three services it was essential that one operational command should exist along the whole of the east coast. (Ibid). The points raised by General Elkins were considered at N.D.H.Q. and, on 23 Jan, a fresh instruction was issued. This placed the general strategic direction of operational policy in the hands of the G.O.C.-in-C. but left the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 responsible, through H.Q. Atlantic Command, for tactical command and administration within that district. (Ibid: Tel C.G.S. to G.O.C.-in-C., 23 Jan 43)

RESERVE ARMY IN THE LOWER ST. LAWRENCE - TRAINING AND OPERATIONS 1943

31. During the winter months the Army concentrated on the training and organization of the new reserve units. As 2 (R) Bn Fus du St L. was already partially trained and furthermore was farther inland than 3 (R) Bn, greater attention was paid during this period to the training and development of the latter than of the former unit. Six instructional teams, each consisting of one officer and five other ranks, were detailed to assist the permanent A. & T. Staff of 3 Bn in bringing up that unit to the required standard in the shortest possible time. The chief difficulty encountered by these teams was that communications, due to climatic conditions, were bad, and travel between detachments had to be carried out by sleigh, snowmobile or dog teams, whichever could be found in each locality. The keen interest of the men, however, and the practical nature of the training made good progress possible. Although training exercises could not be carried out during the closed season, in so far as it was possible, the men were familiarized with the duties they were to carry out during the summer months. Meanwhile recruiting continued, and by February, the strength of 2 Bn was 21 Officers and 1001 Other Ranks, and of 3 Bn 18 Officers and 1604 Other Ranks (included in these figures, however, were six officers and 11 Other Ranks of the permanent A. & T. Staff). Both units had now been clothed and equipped, but the arms situation although good, was not yet complete, due chiefly to the ever increasing number of personnel. By the beginning of March, 2 Bn had received 423 rifles, 24 Reising and 46 Sten guns, and 3 Bn 1000 rifles and 155 Stens. (H.Q.S. 3544-A Vol 3: 2 and 3 (R) Bns Les Fus du St L. Progress Report, 4 Mar 43)

32. Upon the opening of navigation at the end of April, both units were allotted coast watching and local defence roles. Training continued, and apart from basic weapon training and drill, the units carried out in detachment areas local defence and wood clearing schemes. In addition schemes designed to practise detachments in taking action on receipt of a night alert were carried out. Between 26 Jun and 10 Jul, 500 officers and other ranks of 2 Bn attended summer camp at Rimouski. Detachments of this unit localized along the

coast and 3 Bn did not, however, attend summer camp. Recruiting was carried on all through the summer and autumn months, and by the end of October, the strength of 2 Bn had risen to 38 officers and 1213 other ranks, and 3 Bn to 49 officers and 1877 other ranks.* (H.Q.S. 9027-2: Progress Report Defences Gaspé Peninsula 3 May and 19 Oct 43)

33. During the 1943 shipping season personnel from the Reserve Army took part in the enforcement of the "dim out" regulations. In July, troops from 2 and 3 Bns Fus du St. L. erected and manned road blocks at Isle Verte, St. Joseph de Lepage, and Douglastown, where they checked the lighting of all cars travelling at night. In addition "dim out" patrols went out nightly from a number of the shoreline detachment. At the road blocks the Reserve Army troops kept a supply of paint and brushes with which, if the motorist wished, they applied standard "dim out" - at Douglastown, according to a report by the O.C. 3 Bn, of a daily average of 260 cars passing through the barrier some 90% took advantage of these facilities. (H.Q.S. 22-1-17 Vol 4: Second Report of the Defence Co-ordination Officer, 29 Jul 43; H.Q.S. 9027-2: Progress Report, 19 Oct 43)

THE 1944 AND 1945 SHIPPING SEASONS - PLANS AND DISPOSITIONS

34. There were no enemy attacks against shipping in the Gulf and lower River St. Lawrence areas in 1943. Nevertheless, the possibility remained that the enemy might resume his submarine activity in the Gulf area in 1944. Accordingly defence plans were again prepared by the three services. The basic R.C.N. plan remained the same as for previous years, but the number of ships allocated to the Gulf bases, and to bases associated with the protection of Gulf shipping, would vary from 52, planned to be in operation at the opening of navigation, to 62 by July. Air protection for the area would be provided by one anti-submarine and general reconnaissance squadron (15 Canso aircraft), with Headquarters and one flight based at Gaspé, and one flight each at Seven Islands and Summerside. Supplementary air coverage would be provided by aircraft based at Sydney and Gander/Goose Bay which would patrol the two entrances to the Gulf. Should there be a recurrence of enemy activity in the Gulf, additional anti-submarine squadrons would be available in Eastern Air Command for immediate diversion to air bases bordering on the Gulf area. Anti-submarine radar sets would be operated on either side of the Strait of Belle Isle and Cabot Strait, and at the entrance to the St. Lawrence River on the Gaspé coast, and on Anticosti Island. R.C.A.F. radar on the shore

* During the summer of 1943 a supernumerary company of 3 (R) Bn Fus du St L. was organized in the Magdalen Islands. By October 1943 it had a strength of 1 officer and 131 other ranks. This company was organized more for its effect on the morale of the people than for its military value, which was considered to be small, due to geographical reasons and to the scattered nature of the population. (At Comd S.11-18: D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 to Secty D.N.D., 26 Jun and 28 Oct 43)

of the St. Lawrence would replace that operated by the Army in 1943 between Gaspé and Matane. For the 1944 season a Defence Co-ordination Officer would not be appointed since it was felt that "the general public in the lower St. Lawrence River area is now conscious of and satisfied with the defence measures instituted in 1943, which will be kept in force in 1944, and that a satisfactory degree of co-ordination between the services, police and civil defence organizations has been attained". (H.Q.S. 9027 Vol 2: Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Planning Sub-Committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 9 Mar 44, and Plan for the Defence of the Gulf and Lower River St. Lawrence in 1944)

35. Both the role and the dispositions of the Reserve and Active Army units in the Gaspé Peninsula remained generally the same during 1944. The Active Army continued to maintain its coast defence and anti-aircraft installations, and one infantry company at Gaspé, while at Rimouski until May 1944 an infantry battalion (R. de Jol) undergoing refresher training, was available as mobile reserve. * (H.Q.S. 9027 Vol 2: C.G.S. to the Minister 15 May 44, and Defences of the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, 9 Mar 45)

36. Naval and air plans for the defence of shipping in the Gulf area during the 1945 season were similar to those for 1944. For despite the overall favourable trend of the war in Europe during the latter year, the submarine menace still existed. In the autumn the U-boats had again entered the lower river and had torpedoed and damaged two ships off Pointe des Monts. A further consideration was that Canadian shipping plans for 1945 called for an increased use of the St. Lawrence waterway as compared to previous years. Some 64 naval craft would be operating from the bases associated with the protection of the Gulf shipping at the opening of navigation and 72 by July. These dispositions would be subject to change in accordance with the general course of war at sea. Air Force protection would be provided from the resources of the A.O.C.-in-C. Eastern Air Command, who would allocate his forces to meet the needs of the situation. One general reconnaissance squadron would be based at Gaspé. (H.Q.S. 9027 Vol 2: Plan for the Defence of the Gulf and Lower St. Lawrence River in 1945)

37. During the winter 1944-45 the Army had made considerable reductions in its coastal defence forces, and had withdrawn all active units from the port of Gaspé, with the exception of the close defence and examination battery. These units the Army did not propose to replace on the opening of navigation. For the probability of attacks on shore installations was now considered to be a remote one, and it was felt that any attacks which might occur could be successfully handled by the Reserve Army. (Ibid)

38. Early in April the 1945 shipping season opened and the Reserve Army took up its operational roles and manned the road blocks in connection with the enforcement of the "dim out". On 8 May hostilities ceased in Europe, and on

* R. de Jol was moved to Sydney in May 1944 for coast defence duty and was replaced in its reserve role by a mobile detachment organized at Valcartier training centre. (H.Q.S. 9027 Vol 2: D.M.O. & P. to D.O.C. M.D. No. 5, 17 May 44)

the 12th the dim out was suspended, and orders issued for the withdrawal of the road blocks. (H.Q.S. 9027 Vol 2: D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 to Secty, D.N.D., 12 May 45). Finally on 28 Jun N.D.H.Q. informed the D.O.C. M.D. No. 5 that "consequent upon the removal of the submarine menace all units of the Reserve Army under your command may be withdrawn from their operational roles including coast watching" (H.Q.S. 3544-A Vol 4: D.M.O. & P. to D.O.C. M.D. No. 5, 28 Jun 45).

39.

This report was prepared by Maj D.H. Cunningham.

D.H. Cunningham Myia
for (C.P. Stacey) Colonel,
Director Historical Section (G.S.)

LIST OF STEAMSHIPS SUNK IN ST. LAWRENCE IN 1942 AND 1944

<u>Name</u>	<u>Cause of Loss</u>	<u>Date Sunk</u>
S.S. Leto (Neth)	Submarine	12/5/42
S.S. Nicoya (Br)	Submarine	12/5/42
S.S. Dinaric (Br)	Submarine	6/7/42
S.S. Hainault (Belg)	Submarine	6/7/42
S.S. Anastassios Pateras (Gr)	Submarine	6/7/42
S.S. Frederika Lansen (Br)	Submarine	20/7/42
S.S. Chatham (U.S.)	Submarine	27/8/42
S.S. Arlyn (U.S.)	Submarine	28/8/42
S.S. Donald Stuart (Br)	Submarine	3/9/42
S.S. Aeas (Gr)	Submarine	7/9/42
S.S. Mt. Taygetos (Gr)	Submarine	7/9/42
S.S. Mt. Pindus (Gr)	Submarine	7/9/42
S.S. Oakton (Can)	Submarine	7/9/42
S.S. Inger Elizabeth (Nor)	Submarine	15/9/42
S.S. Saturnus (Neth)	Submarine	15/9/42
S.S. Joannis (Gr)	Submarine	16/9/42
X S.S. Essex Lance (Br)	Submarine	16/9/42
S.S. Carolus (Br)	Submarine	9/10/42
S.S. Waterton (Br)	Submarine	11/10/42
S.S. Caribou (Br)	Submarine	14/10/42
X S.S. Fort Thompson (Can)	Submarine	2/11/44

LIST OF HMC SHIPS SUNK IN ST. LAWRENCE IN 1942 AND 1944

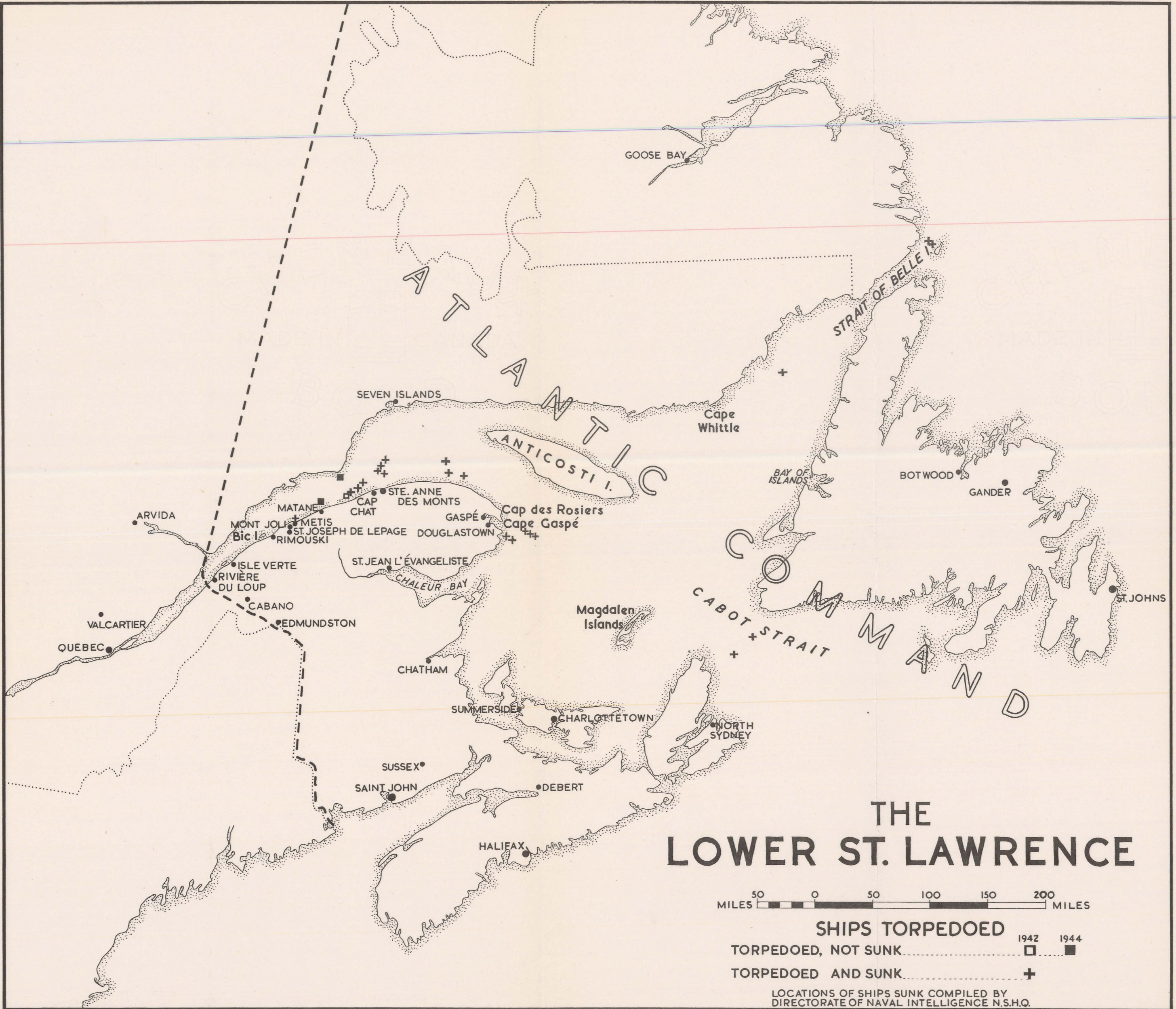
<u>Name</u>	<u>Cause of Loss</u>	<u>Date Sunk</u>
HMCS Raccoon	Submarine	14/9/42
HMCS Charlottetown	Submarine	18/9/42
HMCS Magog	Submarine	14/10/42
HMCS Shawinigan	Submarine	Nov./44

X Torpedoed but not sunk.

(Compiled from information provided by Directorate of Naval Intelligence, N.S.H.Q.).

28 Jun 51

This is an amended list sent to this directorate by Director of Naval Information in reply to our HQS 1450-9 of 16 May 51. It has been checked with directorate of Naval Intelligence.
 Note: the location of Shawinigan's sinking unknown.



THE LOWER ST. LAWRENCE

MILES 50 0 50 100 150 200 MILES

SHIPS TORPEDOED
 TORPEDOED, NOT SUNK 1942 1944
 TORPEDOED AND SUNK +

LOCATIONS OF SHIPS SUNK COMPILED BY DIRECTORATE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE N.S.H.Q.