

= Leonard W. Murray =

Rear Admiral Leonard Warren Murray , CB , CBE (22 June 1896 ? 25 November 1971) was an officer of the Royal Canadian Navy who played a significant role in the Battle of the Atlantic . He commanded the Newfoundland Escort Force from 1941 ? 1943 , and from 1943 to the end of the war was Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief , Canadian Northwest Atlantic . He was the only Canadian to command an Allied theatre of operations during World War I or World War II .

= = Early years to the end of World War I = =

Leonard Warren Murray was born at Granton , Nova Scotia on 22 June 1896 . His father Simon Dickson Murray (1859 ? 1936) was a direct descendant of the Scottish immigrants who travelled to Pictou County on the Hector in 1773 , and his mother was Jane Falconer (1868 ? 1968) . Simon was mid @-@ level manager in various enterprises in Pictou Landing , and Leonard grew up close to the water . At 14 years of age , Murray left Pictou Academy to join the first intake of 21 recruits into the Royal Naval College of Canada in Halifax , which had just been created by the Naval Service Act of 4 May 1910 .

" The first winter at the naval college was absolute hell , we had no uniforms , we arrived in what we stood up in and had to send home for further clothing . A case of measles broke out very shortly and we were quarantined , and the only time we got out of the college was when we went to the skating rink to play hockey ; and that was a great relief . " - Admiral Murray .

Immediately after graduating in January 1913 , he served as a Midshipman on the Royal Navy vessel HMS Berwick on duty protecting British interests in the Mexican Revolution , and then aboard HMS Essex . At the outbreak of World War I he was assigned to the protected cruiser HMCS Niobe , the largest ship in the Royal Canadian Navy during World War I. Four of his classmates were sent to the Royal Navy cruiser HMS Good Hope and were killed off the coast of South America on 1 November 1914 at the Battle of Coronel ? thereby becoming the first Canadian @-@ service casualties of World War I. Murray served briefly as Flotilla Gunnery Officer on HMCS Margaret and then in February 1916 was promoted to Sub @-@ Lieutenant while aboard HMCS Rainbow . He spent the last two years of World War I as Assistant Navigating Officer on HMS Leviathan from January 1917 as Lieutenant , where he set up troop convoys across the Atlantic to outwit German U @-@ boats ? invaluable experience for the Battle of the Atlantic more than 20 years later . Murray ended the war in the North Sea aboard HMS Agincourt , and witnessed the surrender of the German fleet at Scapa Flow .

= = Between the wars = =

After World War I , Murray served briefly on HMS Ithuriel , and then on the newly commissioned HMS Calcutta under the distinguished British Captain Percy Noble , from whom Murray learned the basic skills of command , and who eighteen years later served opposite Murray on the receiving end of the convoys as Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief , Western Approaches Command . Following a short tour aboard HMS Crescent , Murray was assigned to HMS Aurora as Navigation Officer , until Aurora was paid off in 1921 due to naval budget cuts . Leonard married Jean Chaplin Scott in Westmount , Quebec on 10 October 1921 , and with the Royal Canadian Navy depleted of ships on which he could serve , at this point he considered a civilian career , in 1924 qualifying as master of a foreign @-@ going vessel . Deciding to remain with the armed forces , Murray joined many of his colleagues and spent the inter @-@ war years alternating between shore assignments as a training officer with the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve , and serving aboard Royal Navy vessels , which in Murray 's case included HMS Revenge (during a tour in 1923 in Turkey where he befriended Lord Louis Mountbatten) , and HMS Queen Elizabeth . Understandably , this provided Murray and his peers , including Percy W. Nelles , with a distinct anglophile and , in matters military , Royal Navy bias . In January 1925 , Murray was promoted to Lieutenant @-@ Commander and spent two years at the Royal Canadian Navy 's main training base at HMCS Stadacona . In 1927 ,

Murray returned to the UK where he did a tour aboard HMS Tiger and then spent 1928 studying at the Royal Naval Staff College at Greenwich . During a simulation exercise at the College , Murray broke new ground by planning large convoys - convoys that were regarded at the time as " almost suicidal " , but which had become normal by the time of the Battle of the Atlantic . Upon return to Canada in January 1929 , Murray was promoted to Commander and became the senior naval officer at CFB Esquimalt . In notes for a lecture to RMC Kingston in 1932 , his continuing interest in the offensive merit of convoys over patrols is evident :

" The institution of a system of convoy requires a reorientation of the protective forces . Instead of patrolling the focal areas [where vessels congregate near ports or narrow passages] , the group of ships forming the convoy is escorted by an armed escort capable of dealing with any possible scale of attack . This may mean that an increase in the protective force is necessary , but ... the protective force is more definite and concrete than in the patrolling method . In the convoy method ... it is not possible for an enemy to attack without laying herself open to attack and possible destruction " - Admiral Murray .

From June 1932 Murray was assigned for a year to Naval Service Headquarters in Ottawa as a Naval Staff Officer before setting back to sea for two years , leading the small fleet of East Coast destroyers from the bridge of his first operational command HMCS Saguenay . At this point , in mid @-@ 1934 , Murray was appointed to a new position of Senior Naval Officer , Halifax , a position that combined the Commander of the East Coast with the Command of the Naval Dockyard in Halifax . In June 1936 Murray was sent back to the UK to work in the Admiralty Operations Division , and in December 1936 he started his final tour with the Royal Navy serving as Executive Officer aboard the former battleship HMS Iron Duke , where he participated in the 1937 Coronation Fleet Review . In August 1938 , in the middle of a final year at the Imperial Defence College , Murray was promoted to Captain , and so it was that , on the eve of World War II when the Royal Navy was mobilized , Murray returned to Ottawa as a Captain , and Director Naval Operations and Training .

= = World War II and the Battle of the Atlantic = =

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At the outbreak of World War II , he was appointed Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff . From this HQs position Murray played a key role in the build @-@ up of the Navy to its eventual wartime strength of approximately 332 vessels , including crossing Canada to recruit retired Royal Navy officers back into the Royal Canadian Navy , and advocating for the " small @-@ ship anti @-@ submarine " investment strategy that was eventually so successful . In March 1940 he made a secret visit to the UK to negotiate the construction of destroyers in the UK for the Royal Canadian Navy , and subsequently was a founding member of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence . It was while he was working for the PJBD that he renewed his friendship with Commander James " Chummy " Prentice , who was shortly thereafter assigned the position of Senior Officer , Canadian Corvettes under Murray . Both men would work closely together until the spring of 1944 . In October 1940 , he went back to sea briefly as Captain of HMCS Assiniboine and Commodore Commanding Halifax Force , effectively in command of the five Canadian warships that were dispatched to the UK in January 1941 to serve convoy duty . Back ashore in the UK , Murray was given the unusual title of Commodore Commanding Canadian Ships , and liaised closely with the Admiralty in the planning of an Atlantic strategy , including the resolution of jurisdictional matters relating to the Dominion of Newfoundland .

On return to Canada he was promoted to full Commodore on 31 May 1941 , and on 13 June 1941 he was put in charge of the Newfoundland Escort Force (NEF) based out of St John 's . This was the most important operational mandate given to a Royal Canadian Navy officer until that point , in full command of 6 Canadian destroyers , 7 British destroyers , and 21 corvettes , and with responsibility for convoy escort from New York out as far as the transfer point to UK escorts south of Iceland . In recognition of this increased role , Murray was subsequently appointed Rear Admiral on

2 December 1941 .

" Conditions were terrible that winter . Groups worked on a 35 day cycle which entailed 29 days away from St John 's , 27 days away from fresh bread , 25 days away from fresh meat , added to which at the northern end of their beat there was no sunlight to speak of in the winter . We had to revert to the old rations of Nelson 's time , barreled salt beef with lime juice or tomato juice to scare away scurvy " - Admiral Murray .

= = = The Saint Pierre and Miquelon " incident " = = =

While based in Newfoundland , Admiral Murray hosted a visit from the Free French Admiral Muselier . Acting on orders from the Admiralty , Murray gave Muselier temporary command of three French corvettes and a submarine that were assigned to Murray 's fleet , for passage to Halifax . On return from Halifax , Muselier took the vessels to Vichy @-@ controlled Saint Pierre and Miquelon , and on 24 December 1941 raised the Free French flag on the islands . This was interpreted as a territorial claim on behalf of General Charles de Gaulle , thereby creating a diplomatic incident between France , Canada and the United States . De Gaulle 's seizure of the archipelago was over the opposition of Canada , Great Britain , and the United States , which were concerned about pushing the Vichy government into an openly pro @-@ German stance .

Murray was later asked to account for his role in this adventure - but steadfastly claimed (as did Muselier) that he had no part in it . Nevertheless , in 1946 Murray was awarded the Legion d 'Honneur by the Government of France , for " eminent services rendered to the cause of Free France at the time of the rallying of the inhabitants of St Pierre and Miquelon " .

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The NEF was reorganized in February 1942 as the Mid @-@ Ocean Escort Force (MOEF) . On 9 September 1942 , Murray was appointed to Commanding Officer Atlantic Coast , with his Headquarters in Halifax , and effective command over 322 armed ships . As a direct result of the Atlantic Convoy Conference of 1 ? 12 March 1943 , where it was agreed that the US Navy would concentrate on the South Atlantic leaving Canada and the UK to cover the North Atlantic , on 1 April 1943 Murray was made Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief Canadian Northwest Atlantic . Still headquartered in Halifax , thereafter he commanded all Allied air and naval forces involved in convoy protection between Canada and the coast of Ireland until the end of the war with Germany in 1945 .

In order to encourage the captains of the merchant ships of all countries which carry the lifeblood of the U.K. , I made it a point to attend the briefing conference of all captains and chief engineers before their departure . During the winter of ' 42- ' 43 , when sinkings were at their worst , I could see when I told them of the measures by escort and air cover that were being taken for their protection and safety ; I could see that they knew very well and that they knew I knew in spite of my brave words , that anything up to 25 per cent of them would probably not arrive in the U.K. in their own ships , and that probably half of that number would not arrive in the U.K. at all . But there was never a waver in their resolve - Admiral Murray .

A personal highlight of this period occurred on 14 September 1943 , when Murray gave an impromptu guided tour of Halifax to the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill . Churchill and his family , together with the First Sea Lord , boarded HMS Renown in Halifax harbour for their return voyage to the United Kingdom following consultations with US President Roosevelt . Murray was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 1943 King 's Birthday Honours , and Companion of the Order of the Bath the following year .

As the Allies gained the upper hand in the Battle of the Atlantic throughout 1943 and 1944 , attacks on convoys diminished and the amount of escort cover was reduced , but the hard work of planning and organizing convoys never ceased . By May 1944 , British participation in convoy escorts was withdrawn entirely , and Canada was left with sole responsibility until September 1944 . Murray 's moment of singular pride came in this period , when the largest convoy of World War II , HX 300

sailed for the UK via New York on 17 July 1944 , with 167 merchant ships (1 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 long tons (1 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 t)) . It arrived in the UK , without incident , on 3 August 1944 .

= = VE Day and early retirement = =

Admiral Murray was controversially blamed for allowing sailors shore leave in Halifax on VE Day , a decision that is generally considered to have contributed to the Halifax Riot of 7 ? 8 May 1945 . James Lorimer Ilsley , the Acting Prime Minister of Canada , responded quickly to the situation and on 10 May appointed Justice Kellock to chair a Royal Commission into the disorders . On 12 May , Murray was abruptly removed from his command ; and the next day a separate Naval Board of Inquiry under Admiral Brodeur was appointed to investigate naval participation in the disorders . The Kellock Commission placed considerable blame upon the Navy and in particular upon the Admiral , for not having exercised better control over the sailors ' celebrations ashore . The Naval Inquiry 's findings were more balanced , finding that the riot was caused by several factors , including a failure in the naval command . Murray himself felt that responsibility lay mainly with the civil authorities of Halifax , and he was frustrated that the Kellock Commission effectively placed the Navy on trial without providing him or his officers with an opportunity to defend themselves . He asked for a court martial to clear his name , but this was never agreed . The Government made an attempt to leave the Admiral with his honour intact :

" It would be a regrettable thing if , resultant upon the Halifax disturbances , the truly great services of this officer and those under his command were to be forgotten by the people of Canada . "

But the Admiral was never assigned another command . Concluding that he was being held up as a scapegoat , and feeling bitter that the country and the Navy had abandoned him suddenly at the moment of the Navy 's greatest accomplishment , Murray left Canada for the United Kingdom in September 1945 , and officially retired from the Navy on 14 March 1946 .

= = Later years = =

Murray remained active in his retirement , qualifying as a lawyer on 17 November 1949 , and with his specialty in maritime law he represented the British government at the 1950 enquiry into the accidental sinking of SS Hopestar . He was involved with his local church , and served as a rural councillor as well as on school boards . His love of the sea was kept alive by keen membership in the Bar Yacht Club where he was racing Captain for ten years , and a leadership role with the Sea Scouts ? coincidentally carried back to Canada where a Canadian Sea Cadet Corps in New Glasgow , near his home town , is named in his honour (RCSCC 87 Admiral Murray) . Murray stopped practising law in 1960 to care better for his ailing wife , who died in 1962 . Following a chance meeting on a Greek cruise , Leonard remarried on 23 August 1963 , in Buxton to an ophthalmic surgeon Antonina Schcheyteenin ? who quickly came to be known as Nina Murray . He dabbled in British politics , becoming a member of the Conservative Party and ran unsuccessfully as a candidate in municipal council elections in Buxton in 1965 , before turning his attention to a spirited debate with the Canadian military establishment , the media and Prime Minister Pearson wherein he opposed the 1966 integration of the Canadian Armed Forces . Although clearly feeling that Canada had abandoned him following the Halifax Riot , Murray maintained his ties to Canada and last visited in 1970 , when he participated in the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Battle of the Atlantic .

= = Legacy = =

Leonard died peacefully in Buxton on 25 November 1971 , and his ashes were placed in St Paul 's Church in Halifax on 17 September 1972 . His memory lived on in the Royal Canadian Navy , where the Admiral L.W. Murray Trophy for Gunnery Proficiency was awarded annually at least until the early 1970s . Since his death , a number of commemorative steps have been taken , including the placing of a memorial in his honour in Pictou , a collection of his medals and related naval artifacts in

the Canadian Naval Operations School (CFNOS) in Halifax , the naming of a Maritimes Branch of the Royal Canadian Naval Association , the renaming of Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps NEW GLASGOW in New Glasgow , Nova Scotia to Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps ADMIRAL MURRAY , and the naming of several naval buildings , including CFNOS building at CFB Halifax .

= = Quote = =

" Except for the few months at sea in Assiniboine , my war work was a solid slog , mostly at a desk , averaging 15 hours a day with frequently a full 24 . My job was to obtain the greatest possible result from relatively inexperienced personnel . There was little opportunity for anyone to step on another 's toes . They were spread too thinly and there was a more responsible job for each as soon as he felt confident of his ability to take it on . In the autumn of 1941 young volunteer reserve officers who had never seen salt water before the war took command of corvettes manned by 88 men - the number of white and black keys on a piano and each with his own peculiar note - and took their full part in the Battle of the Atlantic . Experience had taught me this : to find out what you 're capable of , it is only necessary to get a chance to do it - and someone else must have enough confidence in you to provide that chance . In my dealings with the young RCNVR captains I did my best to give them the opportunity to find their own feet and they did it . Once having tasted success they never looked back . What a blessing that we had the bright young peoples to accept this kind of responsibility " - Admiral Murray .

= = Honours and decorations = =