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THE ROLE OF DESTROYERS IN THE NAVY

The three destroyers which India has acquired from the United Kingdom will reach Bombay on January 23. Their arrival marks an important stage in the expansion programme of the Royal Indian Navy.

India's destroyer Flotilla consists of HMI ships RAJPUT, RANJIT and RANA. Prior to leaving the United Kingdom these ships underwent extensive refits to render them operationally fit in tropical waters.

Since leaving the United Kingdom they were attached to the Mediterranean fleet of the Royal Navy for over two months. They have taken part in fleet exercises, manoeuvres, and other trials with ships of the Royal Navy. These exercises known as "working up" are essential to newly commissioned vessels to enable the officers and men therein to acquire the necessary individual ship and fleet experience.

By virtue of their design, equipment and general handiness destroyers can discharge a variety of functions in a modern navy. Their primary duties consist of screening their own, and attacking enemy, heavy ships with torpedoes.

In addition to their high speed and manoeuvrability destroyers possess armament for anti-submarine operations, besides torpedoes and guns for fighting light forces and craft. Their good sea-keeping qualities in relation to size make them an invaluable addition to a fleet.

They are usually stationed ahead of the main task force consisting of heavy ships, and in addition to providing cover against air attacks and attacks from other ships, they afford all-important security against submarine attacks. They also act as a radar screen and give early warning of the approach of the enemy.

India's Destroyer flotilla will be commanded by Captain A. Chakraverti, RIN, who will also be in command of the leader of the

of the flotilla, HMIS RAJPUT. HMIS RANJIT will be commanded by Commander Kapoor and HMIS RANA by Commander Kohli.

These destroyers were built in 1942 and have each a displacement of over 1,700 tons. Their armament consists of four 4.7 inch guns, four 2 pounder pom-poms, eight 20-mm guns, 8.21 inch torpedo-tubes besides the most up to date radar equipment and anti-submarine devices. The terrific power of these vessels is derived from Parson's geared turbines capable of a shaft H.P. of 40,000 and a speed of over 35 knots.

HMIS RAJPUT as HMS ROTHERHAM, was engaged in 1944 along with other HM ships in seeking a blockade runner reported to be operating between Japan and Europe. In 1945 she took part in many shipping sweeps in the Indian Ocean and covered the assault on Rangoon. She was also part of a strong force which bombarded Sumatra and Malaya.

HMIS RANJIT as HMS REDOUBT, was engaged from the end of 1942 to the end of 1943 in escorting troop convoys to the Mediterranean, and during the closing months of 1943 she was employed on convoy duties in the Indian Ocean. In 1945 she covered an assault on Rangoon and till the end of the war patrolled the Malacca Straits.

HMIS RANA as HMS RAIDER, was first in action in the Sicilian campaign and later carried out many bombardments in support of the Army in Italy. Till 1944 she remained in the Mediterranean and then joined the East Indian fleet in operations against the Japanese.

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