

representing a total of 22,161,000 gross tons, which is nearly double the tonnage lost in 1914-18.

Never before in the history of human conflict has sea power played so great a part as in the present world struggle, and in global war merchant shipping is the ultimate key to all strategy. Indeed, sea power has only now truly come into its own. Yet the decisive importance of controlling the great medium of mass transportation in global warfare and the

port. One such tanker, reconstructed, was recently in Wellington.

Many of the big ships trading to New Zealand can tell brave stories. There is the "Sussex," which four years ago was attacked by a German aircraft 650 miles west of Ireland. One bomb exploded in the funnel wrecking the whole of the superstructure, including the navigating bridge and chart-room, and smashing the compasses. A second bomb exploded in a forward hold and started a bad fire in



projection of the traditional advantages of sea power on to a world-wide scale do not yet suffice to explain the extraordinary increase in the significance of sea power in the present conflict. Sea power has been promoted to a function of direct, decisive intervention in the most crucial strategic issues themselves.

The Merchant Navy, supplier-in-chief to the Royal Navy, the Air Force, and the Army, has been the foundation on which the United Nations have been enabled to plan and build for ultimate victory. The enemy realized that from the beginning—hence his all-out efforts against our merchant ships and seamen.

Those of you who saw that great film, "San Demetrio," will have learned why the enemy's effort to defeat the Merchant Navy has failed. The boat's crew who reboarded their burning petrol-laden tanker and navigated her to port without chart or compass were typical British merchant seamen.

More than once when a tanker has been torpedoed by a U-boat and broken in two, the fore-part sinking, the ship's people have navigated the after-half into

the cargo close to a compartment holding 40 tons of cordite. Steering by a boat compass, the ship arrived in harbour.

Said the master in his report: "I should particularly like to recommend F. Trundley, assistant steward, aged twenty-three, whose devotion to duty in fighting the fire which burned part of the cordite was outstanding. I should also like to mention Ordinary Seaman Croxford, a lad of eighteen, who, though badly burned and wounded by machine-gun bullets, refused to leave his station at the gun. The whole crew behaved splendidly, and their only regret was at not being able to bring down the enemy." Trundley was awarded the George Medal and Croxford the British Empire Medal, and both were awarded Lloyd's War Medal for bravery at sea.

Then, there was the case of the "Hororata," homeward-bound with a large cargo of meat and dairy-produce. She was torpedoed 200 miles from Flores, in the Azores, the explosion blowing a great hole 45 ft. by 32 ft. in her side. The ship, which was in imminent danger of capsizing, reached Flores, but no