

## **Benzol**

“The fire encompassed burning drums of benzol, a form of gasoline, on the ship's top deck, sending a huge plume of black smoke into the sky.”

A crude form of benzene, containing toluene, xylene, and other hydrocarbons, obtained from coal tar or coal gas and used as a fuel.

## **Bow**

“After a series of whistles and miscommunications between the officers and pilots on the two ships... the Imo struck the starboard bow of the Mont-Blanc.”

The forward part of a ship.

## **Convoy**

“Convoys of merchant ships assembled in Bedford Basin before ferrying their supplies and soldiers to the war effort in Europe.”

A group of ships or vehicles traveling together, typically accompanied by armed troops, warships, or other vehicles for protection.

## **Dispatcher**

“Vincent Coleman, a railway dispatcher, controlled the busy freight- and passenger-rail traffic coming and going from the Halifax peninsula.”

A person whose job is to receive messages and organize the movement of people or vehicles, especially in the emergency services.

## **Gun Cotton**

“The French munitions ship Mont-Blanc — filled with tons of benzol, the high explosive picric acid, TNT and gun cotton — arrived in Halifax to join a convoy...”

Cellulose nitrate containing a relatively large amount of nitrogen: used as an explosive.

## **Harbour Pilot**

“Imo had an experienced, local harbour pilot on board, William Hayes, who knew the navigation rules of the harbour.”

A mariner who manoeuvres ships through dangerous or congested waters, such as harbours or river mouths.

## **Imo**

“The words ‘BELGIAN RELIEF’ were emblazoned in large block letters on the Imo's side.”

A Norwegian ship that was going to New York to get relief supplies for the Belgian people and was leaving Halifax harbour on December 6, 1917.

## **Mont-Blanc**

“Despite the Mont-Blanc's dangerous cargo, there was no special protocol for the passage of munitions ships in the harbour.”

A French munitions ship. It was carrying a lot of explosives and was heading into Halifax harbour on December 6, 1917.

## Munition

“Before the war, the port of Halifax was under civilian control, and ships carrying munitions or explosives were not allowed into the inner reaches of the harbour.”

Military equipment and supplies for fighting: ammunition.

## Picric Acid

“After a few moments the two ships parted, leaving a gash in Mont-Blanc's hull and generating sparks that ignited grains of dry picric acid, stored below its decks.”

A bitter yellow compound obtained by nitrating phenol, used as a dye and in the manufacture of explosives.

## Port

“Imo's path required incoming ships to pass to its right or starboard side, rather than to its left or port side, which was customary.”

The left side of a ship or airplane looking forward.

## Starboard

“Imo's path required incoming ships to pass to its right or starboard side, rather than to its left or port side, which was customary.”

The right side of a ship or airplane looking forward.

## TNT

“The French munitions ship Mont-Blanc — filled with tons of benzol, the high explosive picric acid, TNT and gun cotton — arrived in Halifax to join a convoy...”

An explosive used in artillery shells and bombs and in blasting.

## Tsunami

“The Mont-Blanc exploded at 9:04:35 a.m., sending out a shock wave in all directions, followed by a tsunami that washed violently over the Halifax and Dartmouth shores.”

A large sea wave produced especially by an earthquake or volcanic eruption under the sea.