



Battle of the Atlantic 70th Anniversary Newsletter

ISSUE 3 - MARCH 2013



Welcome to Issue 3 of the Battle of the Atlantic 70th Anniversary Newsletter. The purpose of this Newsletter is to provide information and an update on plans by the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy to mark this historic campaign, which culminates with a national commemoration in Liverpool on Sunday 26th May 2013.

LIVERPOOL EVENTS

25th-27th May

- Royal Navy and International Ships visit Liverpool.
- Selected warships open to the general public - Further information will be promulgated nearer the time.

24th May

- Fly Navy Heritage Trust Charity Reception onboard a RN warship.

25th May

- Royal Marines Band Charity Concert at the Philharmonic Hall.
- Pierhead/Public Realm area open to visitors.
- Veterans Welcome Centre Old Port of Liverpool Buildings opens, operated by City of Liverpool Sea Cadet Unit.
- Royal Navy Patrol Boat Squadron display on the River Mersey, involving P2000 patrol boats, Royal Marines and Merchant Navy.

26th May

- Service of Commemoration at the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.
- Parade led by veterans including Merchant Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, with regular personnel, reservists and cadets from the Armed Forces. Flypast by historic aircraft.

27th May

- BOA70 '40s Themed Party at St George's Hall.
- Raft Race, Albert Dock.

28th May

- Co-ordinated departure led by the Flagship vessel of Trinity House, THV Patricia.



How to Attend Events in Liverpool

Follow Link - [FNHT Charity Reception](#)

Follow Link - [RMB Charity Concert - Liverpool Philharmonic Hall](#)

Service of Commemoration - Contact HQ Naval Regional Commander Northern England on [0151 707 3321](tel:01517073321)

Follow Link - [BOA70 '40s Themed Party at St George's Hall](#)

LONDON EVENTS



1st May

- RUSI discussion panel, '*The Battle of the Atlantic: The Battle Which Had to be Won*' at RUSI, Whitehall. For further details, follow link: <http://www.rusi.org/events/ref:E51347DDF8A6CE/>

8th-12th May

- 3 Royal Navy Warships visit London.

8th May

- BOA70 Evensong Service at St Paul's Cathedral.

9th May

- Royal Navy Flypast, Greenwich (early evening).

11th May

- Merchant Navy Memorial Service at Trinity Gardens, 1300 – 1400. Open to the public.

11th-12th May

- Selected Royal Navy warships are open to the general public - Further information will be promulgated nearer the time.

How to Attend Events in London

Follow Link - [Evensong Memorial Service at St Paul's](#)

OTHER EVENTS

How to Attend Other Events

19th April

- An evening to commemorate BoA70 at St Peter's Church, Soberton, Hampshire. For further details, contact Cdr Scott RN (Retd) robmunroscott@aol.com or 01489 877800

30th May

- BOA70 Dinner onboard HMS VICTORY - Contact Rosie Munns - 02392 72 7593
Email: rosie.munns@nmrn.org.uk

DERRY/LONDONDERRY EVENTS

10th-12th May

- Royal Navy warship visits Derry/Londonderry.

11th May

- Dedication of statue to the 'The International Sailor'; to those who lost their lives in the Battle of the Atlantic. It mirrors one that exists in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- A civil society/RNA event in Peace Square, to include Canadian veterans.

12th May

- Parade and wreath laying on The Foyle from a RN warship.

Further information will be available on the Derry/Londonderry City websites.



How to Attend Events in Derry/Londonderry

Dedication of statue - Free Public Access.

Parade and wreath laying - Free Public Access.

It is, without doubt, difficult to quantify the sacrifices made by the Merchant Fleet during the Battle of the Atlantic in terms of loss of shipping but also considerable loss of life. The Merchant Fleet was by no means unfamiliar with great loss having suffered during the First World War, however, these numbers were significantly increased during the Second World War.

Proportionately, in terms of the total headcount across the four services, the number of casualties suffered by the Merchant Navy was approximately three times that of the Army and over twice that of the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force. According to estimates from the War Office, with these figures in mind, this equates to 'roughly 1 in 6 [...] became casualties' (Dr M Llewellyn-Jones Aug 12).



A U-boat shells a merchant ship which remained afloat after being torpedoed, unknown date.

Source: IWM Collections IWM Photo No.: MISC 51237



Shipping losses: HMS ARK ROYAL sinking after being torpedoed by U 81.

HMS LEGION is alongside to take off survivors. HMS LAFOREY is approaching to aid in providing water and power to the few remaining personnel on board. © IWM (A 6329)



Shipping losses: A merchant ship sinks stern first after being torpedoed by a U-boat.

Source: IWM Foreign Office (PID) Second World War Photograph Library. Classified Print Collection Photo No. MISC 51236



Merchant Navy Memorial - 'No Grave but the Sea'

Nestled beside the historic Tower of London is the Tower Hill Memorial at Trinity Square Gardens, commemorating those men of the Merchant Navy and fishing fleets who lost their lives during the two World Wars. The first (designed by Edwin Lutyens), commemorates the 12,000 men lost during The First World War. The Second World War Memorial (designed by Sir Edward Maufe), is sited in a sunken garden and honours the 24,000 men of the Merchant Navy and fishing fleet, and 50 Australian seamen, who lost their lives in the service of their country.



Source:

www.barrowuponsoarwarmemorials.com/userimages

Opened by Queen Elizabeth II in November 1955 and designed by Charles Wheeler, two columns, one representing an officer and the other a seamen, flank the inscription "THE TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND OF THE MERCHANT NAVY AND FISHING FLEETS WHOSE NAMES ARE HONOURED ON THE WALLS OF THIS GARDEN GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY AND HAVE NO GRAVE BUT THE SEA".

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest continuous military campaign of The Second World War and was pivotal to the overall success of the allied forces. It started with the sinking of the SS Athenia on 3 September 1939 and ended with the surrender of Germany on 8 May 1945. About 30,000 Merchant Navy (MN) personnel were lost and thousands of ships and cargoes sunk. After the fall of Europe the main supply route for the continued prosecution of the war was between the United States / Canada and the UK via the North Atlantic.

It was the successful protection of this vital sea corridor by the defeat of the German Surface and U-boat threat that enabled the massive logistic build up that led to victories in North Africa, at D-Day and then through to the fall of Germany.

The Battle of the Atlantic demonstrated the enduring importance of control of the sea to provide a highway for the transport of raw materials, munitions, and men, to maintain the nation's security and to project power across the globe.

The BOA Key Statistics

Source: © IWM (A 20973)

Convoys: A destroyer escort steaming through heavy seas while escorting a convoy.



188 Ships under British Control Sunk.

757 U Boats Lost or Destroyed.

5,000 British, Allied and Neutral Merchant Vessels Sunk Worldwide.

At least 30,000 Merchant Seamen known to have been lost.



Source: © IWM (C 2647)

An aerial view of a convoy in the Atlantic, 1941. During the course of the war 366,852 tons of Allied Merchant shipping were sunk in the Atlantic. Two escorts can be seen in the foreground.

ROYAL MARINES – THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

In the Battle of the Atlantic, Royal Marines were part of the crews of all RN ships of cruiser size or larger. Traditionally they manned the 'X' gun turret, while the RM Band's action stations were in the 'Transmitting Station' deep inside the ship, where they carried out the calculations necessary to lay the guns on target. In HMS HOOD's action with the *Bismarck* in May 1941 the whole detachment of 164 Marines, including the Band, lost their lives: the *Bismarck* herself was sunk a few days later.

Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships – 'DEMS' - were equipped with guns manned by ex-service pensioners, with former Royal Marines playing a full part: a number were awarded either the British Empire Medal or the Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea.



The RM Band of HMS Hood playing on deck. All 164 of the band were lost when the ship was sunk in 1941.

During the Second World War, and most significantly the Battle of the Atlantic, the UK was heavily dependent on the sea for imports crucial to the survival of the nation and its ability to sustain forces on the battlefronts across the world. Whilst it would be easy to assume that this has changed with the developments in aviation, this is not the case. The UK remains heavily dependent on the sea for its economic development, both in terms of trade and energy supplies. This is not just restricted to home waters, international sea lanes need to be maintained for the benefit of all; the Royal Navy and Royal Marines play a key role in achieving this.

Maritime Context in Numbers (Source: Royal Navy Website)

- **The Sea:** The UK is an island with 10,500 miles of coastline, 600 ports, approximately 290 offshore oil and gas installations and a significant fishing industry: we are almost entirely dependent on the sea for our economic prosperity.
- **UK Trade:** 95 per cent of UK trade by volume (580 million tonnes) goes by sea. In terms of tonnage handled, UK ports are the largest in Europe.
- **Energy Security:** The UK's dependency on imported gas is set to rise and overseas sources will provide up to 80 per cent of UK energy needs by 2020. Seaborne Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) shipments will be central to future UK energy demand.
- **Economic Impact:** In total, UK-based shipping contributes £10bn a year to GDP and almost £3bn to tax revenues making it the UK's fourth largest services sector industry.

As preparations continue to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, the UK Government has taken the opportunity to further recognise the contributions made by the veterans of the Arctic Convoys with the announcement of the Arctic Star medal. This medal recognises service between 1941 and 1945 in delivering vital aid to the Soviet Union, running the gauntlet of Arctic weather, enemy submarine, air and surface ship attacks. The first medals were presented by the Prime Minister in Downing Street on 19th March 2013.

For further details about applying for the Arctic Star Medal, follow the link:

<https://www.gov.uk/the-ministry-of-defence-medal-office>



Contact Us

Your comments and details of interested parties and organisations can be emailed to the BOA70 Programme Office at:

NRCEE-BOA70@mod.uk

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A nation *still* dependent on the Sea...

Useful Links

[BOA70 Liverpool Events Royal Navy Website](#)

[BOA70 London Events Royal Navy Website](#)

[RNA Londonderry Branch](#)

[BOA70 Derry Events Royal Navy Website](#)

[Travel directions to St Paul's Cathedral](#)

[Disabled access to St Paul's Cathedral](#)

Liverpool City Council & City of London websites will be updated as information becomes available.

Further BOA70 information can be found on the website:

www.royalnavy.mod.uk/Battle-of-the-Atlantic