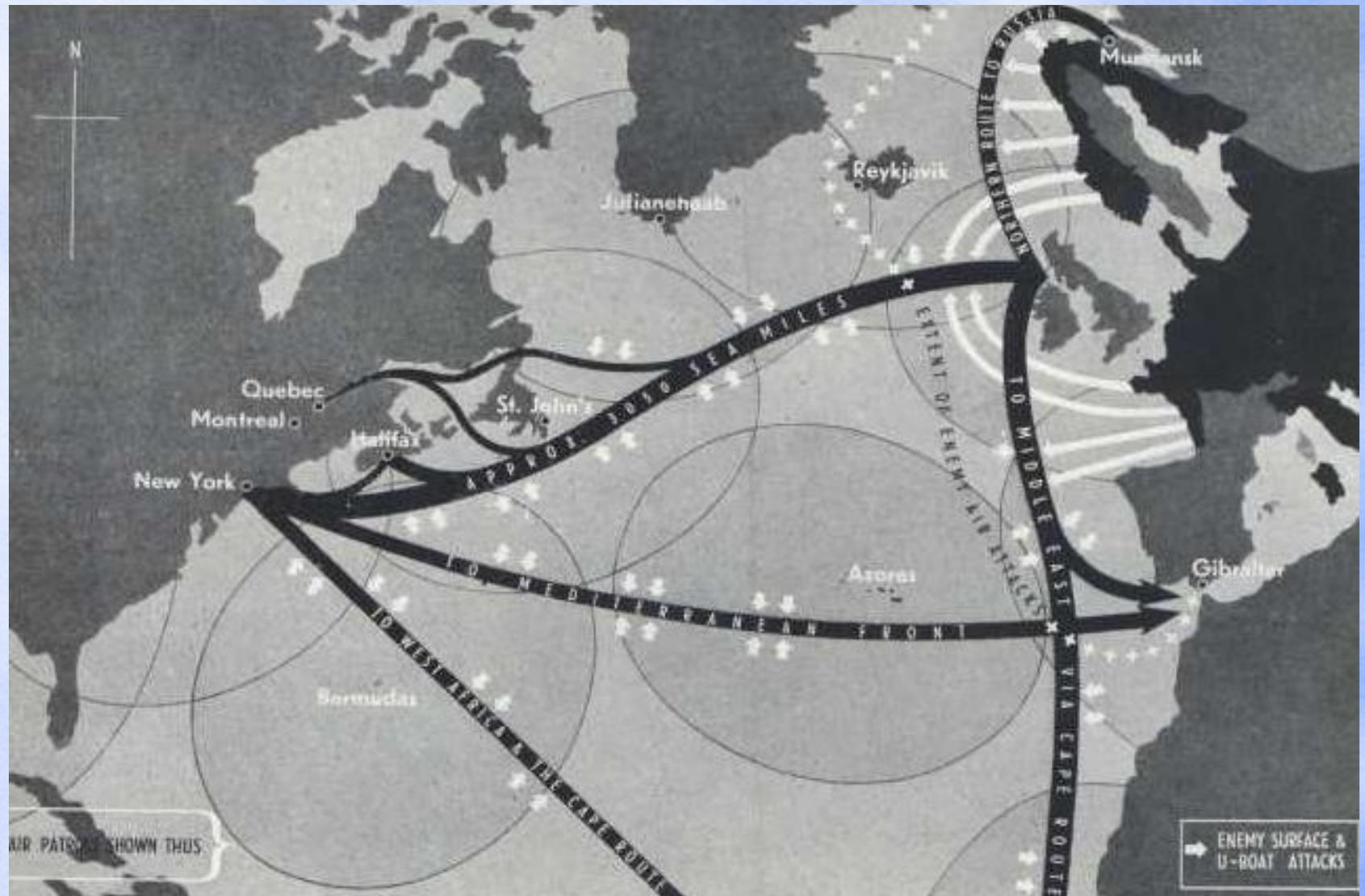


THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC



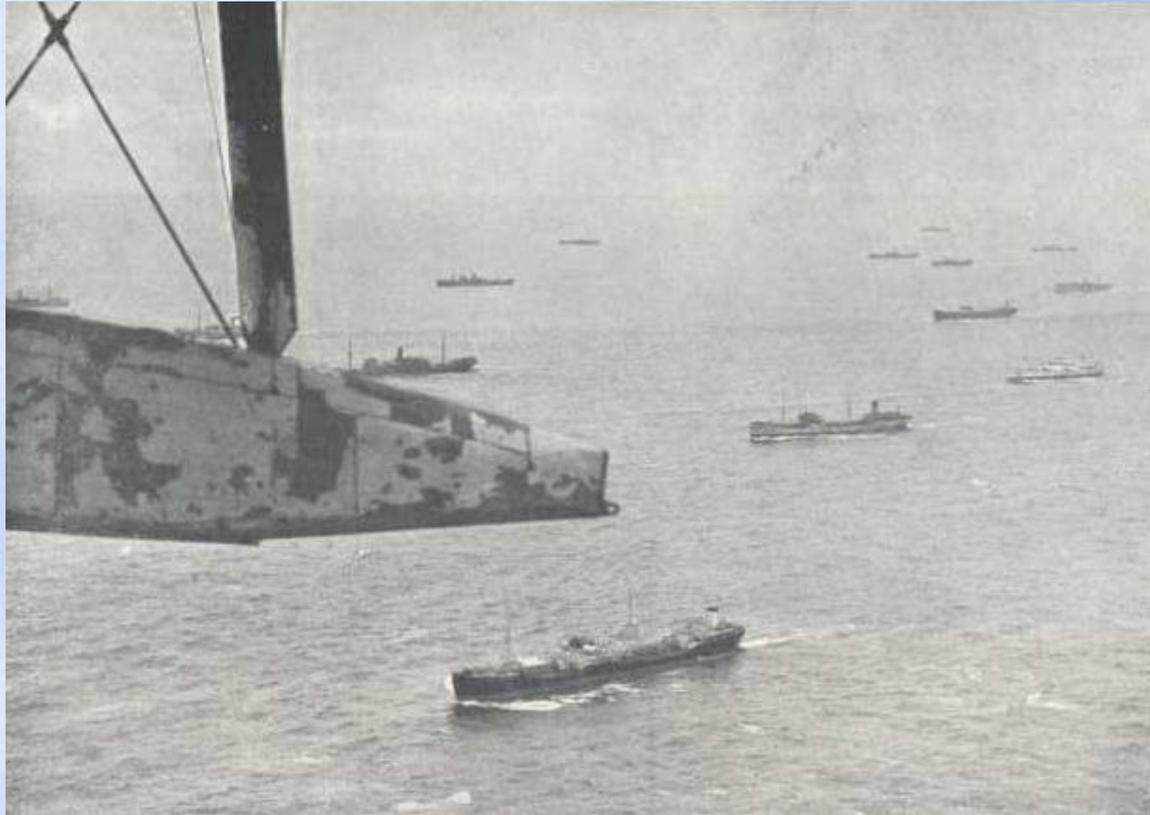
THE ATLANTIC CONVOYS



During the second world war convoys had been used from the beginning. On September 7th 1939, the first outward-bound convoys across the Atlantic left our ports; others coming to the United Kingdom from Halifax, Jamaica, Gibraltar, and Freetown sailed about a week later.

Organisation of the convoys was the task of the Royal Navy.

FIVE HOURS OUT



Before them the 3,000 miles of Atlantic storms and enemy attack. These patient ships are the slender bridges that link the armed base of Britain with the arsenal of the New World.

BATTLING AGAINST THE ELEMENTS



SWELLS!



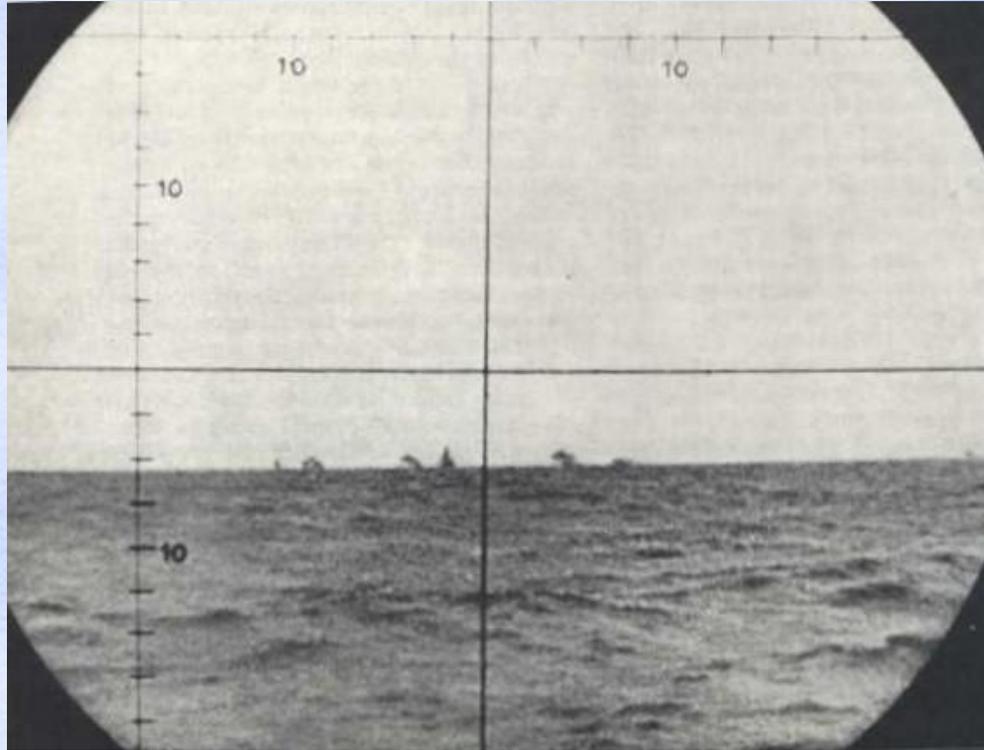
STORMS!

THE ATLANTIC



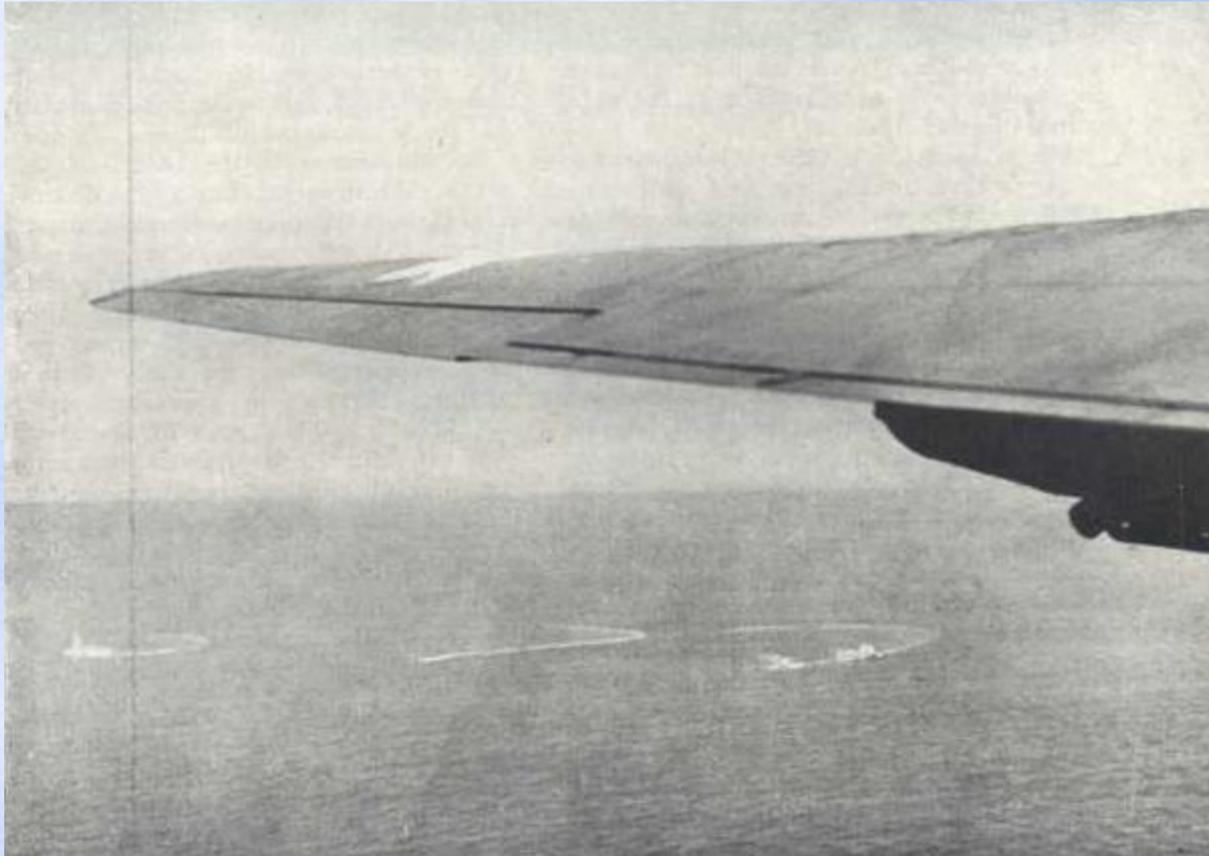
A destroyer struggles in rough seas.

THE EYE OF THE ENEMY



This photograph, taken inside a *German submarine* shows a *convoy* seen through the sights of the periscope. The U-boat is shadowing the *convoy*, waiting for the straggler, watching for the opening.

THE EYE OF THE FRIEND



In this photograph taken from an American Liberator, three enemy submarines cut flurries of spray as they turn to avoid the bombs of Coastal Command aircraft. All were destroyed.

THE OTHER SIDE



Like wheeling birds that foreshadow the presence of land, US naval aircraft fly out to welcome the incoming convoy and shepherd it into harbour.

KEEPING A LOOK-OUT



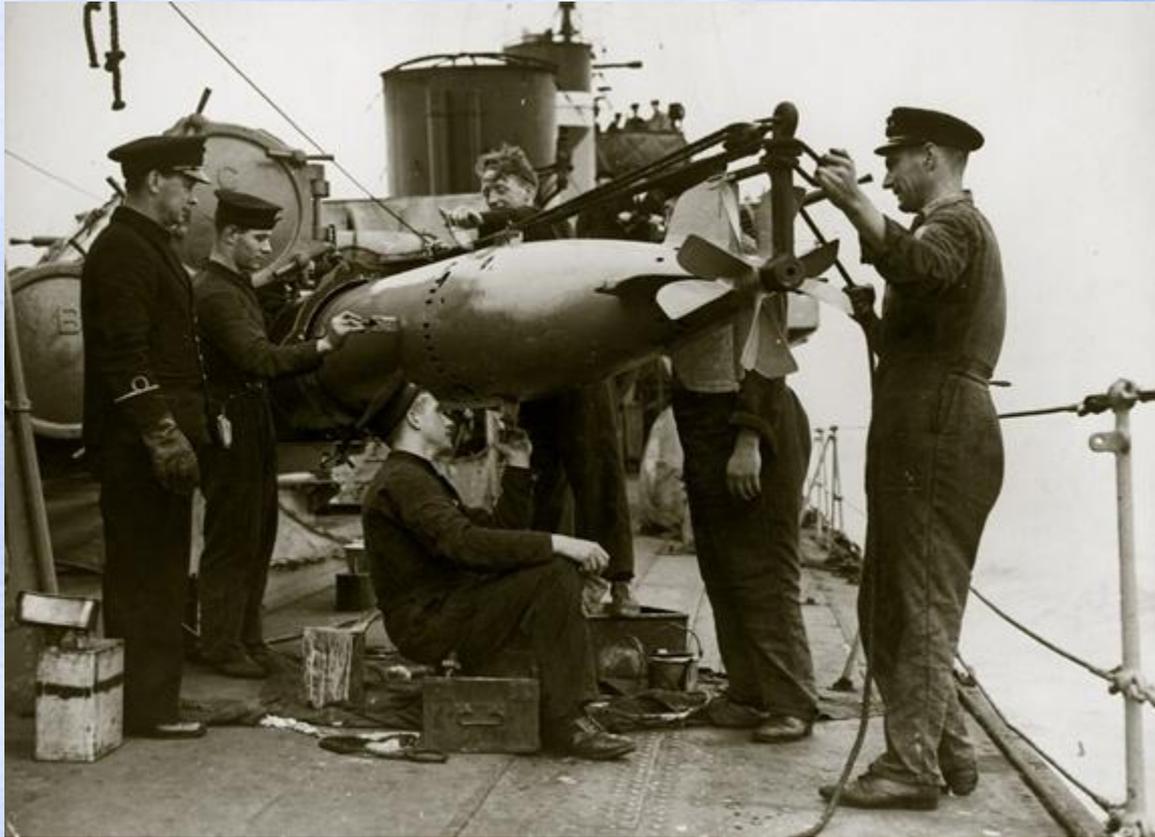
Officers on the bridge of an escorting British destroyer keep a sharp look out for enemy submarines, October 1941.

U-BOAT



There were so many U-boats on patrol in the North Atlantic, it was difficult for convoys to evade detection, resulting in a succession of vicious battles.

PREPARING



A torpedo is loaded onto a destroyer in preparation for convoy escort duties in 1941.

THE ESCORT



Ploughing through heavy seas.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS



RN destroyer on escort duties.

CONVOY



Silhouetted against the Atlantic sky.

ONE OF THE UNLUCKY ONES



A tanker sinks after a torpedo from a U-boat breaks its back.

ATLANTIC CONVOY

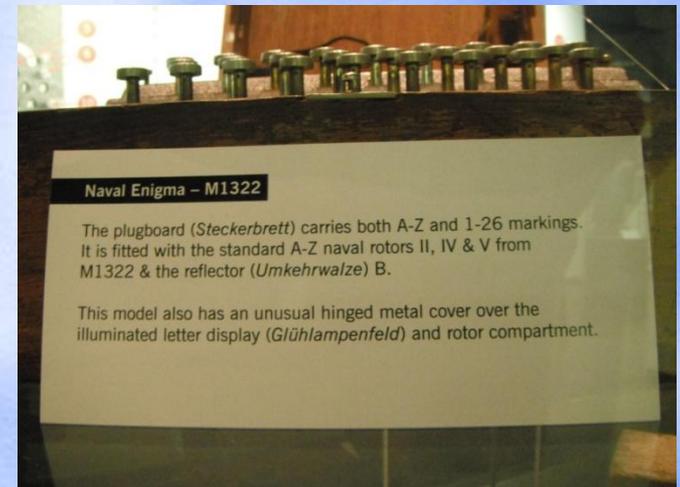
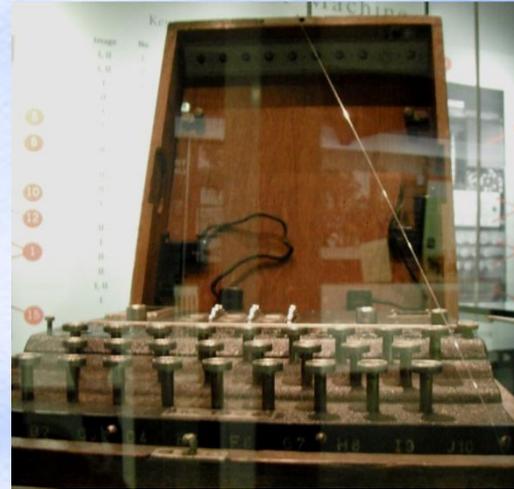


An aerial shot of a convoy, 1942.

THE TIDE IS BEGINNING TO TURN

The capture of the German Enigma Code Machine in 1942 gave the Allies an advantage. U-boats manoeuvres could be anticipated.

This intelligence saved the situation as well as aggressive submarine tactics, better weapons and the development of long-range aircraft equipped with radar.



SUNK



U-boat sinks after being hit with depth charges in April 1943.

CLIMAX OF THE CAMPAIGN



Vice-Admiral Karl Dönitz, commander of German U-boats (*BdU*), 1935-1943;

Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy, 1943-1945.

April 1943 the U-boats were clearly struggling to make an impact, The Allied destruction of the German submarines began to escalate.

By May, wolf packs no longer had the advantage, the month became know as *Black May*. The turning point was centred around the slow convoy ONS 5.

Made up of 43 merchantmen escorted by 16 warships, it was attacked by a pack of 30 U-boats. Although 13 merchant ships were lost, six U-boats were sunk by the escorts or Allied aircraft, also seven of the U-boats were damaged. Despite a storm which had scattered the convoy, the merchantmen reached the protection of land-based air cover, causing Dönitz to call off the attack.

Two weeks later, saw five U-boats destroyed for no losses.. Facing disaster Dönitz called off operations in the Atlantic, allegedly saying, "We had lost the Battle of the Atlantic."

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