

**MEMORIALS FOR THE LIVING**  
**A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF**  
**MYTHOLOGY & REPRESENTATIONS OF**  
**THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC**  
**1939-1945**

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**Master of Arts Thesis**

**By Research**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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### **Memorials For the Living: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Mythology and Representations of the Atlantic Campaign**

This thesis examines representations resulting from the Battle of the Atlantic. Representations of the Second World War have changed little since 1950; there has been even less in portrayals of the Atlantic Campaign. Participant's experiences were distilled into myths: the essence of the events and emotions. Portrayals were written mainly by participants. They embodied what those participants wanted to recall and communicate, and continuity dominated movement in both representation and interpretation.

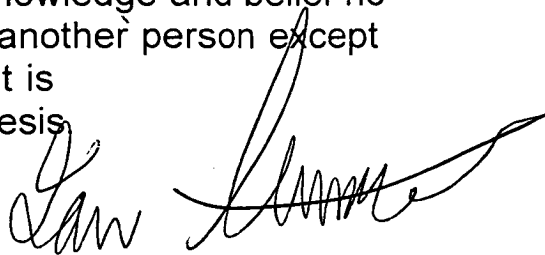
The readily available primary sources tell us little about postwar perceptions of the Atlantic. Secondary sources have been used for the first time to define, describe and illustrate military and civilian mythologies of the Atlantic Battle from many countries, principally Britain, Germany, Canada and the United States of America. How and why participants and others created sense and relationships with their experiences through myth is explained. The limited penetration of popular culture by these portrayals explain their position among other recollections of modern wars.

The sources of these mythologies in maritime culture and their origin during the Great War are shown. Their change and development through Second World War activities and national needs are traced. Without those national needs, postwar limitations upon authors and audiences, as well as the effects of the concentration of public memory upon other things, led to relative ignorance and isolation. The portrayals still embodied participants' requirements.

After the Second World War types of representation and commemoration were defined and established. New sources and new interest in the subject after 1974 are demonstrated. These diverted interest and activity. Recent anniversaries and writing reveal the broad range of types of representation among several media, increasing academic depth and sophistication, and the healthy prospects for further elaboration and exploration. Change has been brought by the desire of new, younger non-participants to rework and reinterpret old events and myths in order to achieve greater understanding, and promote more awareness and commemoration of relatively neglected people and their times.

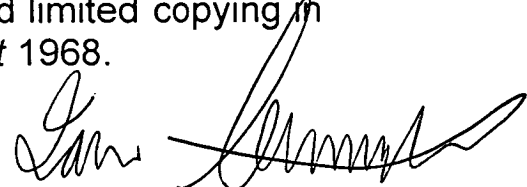


This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the Thesis, and to the best of the candidate's knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Campbell', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ian Campbell

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Ian Campbell

**Have You Seen The Old Man  
Outside The Seamen's Mission?  
Memory Fading With The Medal  
Ribbons That He Wears  
And In Our Winter City  
The Rain Cries Little Pity  
For One More Forgotten Hero  
& A World That Doesn't Care  
So How Can You Tell Me You're Lonely?  
And Say For You That The Sun Don't Shine  
Let Me Take You By The Hand  
& Lead You Through The Streets Of London  
I'll Show You Something To Make You Change Your Mind**

Ralph McTell

**For Jim**

**Whom I Knew But Never Knew**

**For The Men Of M.T. *Inverlane*,  
M.V. *San Adolfo*  
& S.S. *Oakcrest*...**

**For All Who Fought  
In The Battle Of The Atlantic  
& Were Forgotten**

**& Those Who Loved Them**

**And For All Other Young Men & Women,  
In Peace Or War,  
Who Have Died Before Their Time.**

### Author's Note

Due to the unusually large number of books and films used as  
primary sources,  
they have not been footnoted fully in the text,  
both for reasons of space, and for convenience.

All are fully cited in the bibliography.

A Cross-Cultural Analysis of  
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## TECHNICAL &amp; IDIOMATIC TERMS

N.B. Italicised terms are found elsewhere in the Glossary.

**AA:** Anti-Aircraft: guns or vessels.

**a/c:** Aircraft.

**Adm:** Admiral; Admiralty.

**AMC:** Armed Merchant Cruiser: Ocean liner armed with surplus weaponry as stop-gap patrol cruiser by RN. Some lost in heroic actions with *KM* surface raiders, others sunk by *U-Boats*, rest converted to [more effective] troopships.

**Armed Guard:** (USN) equivalent of *Maritime Royal Artillery Regiment*, or RN *DEMS* personnel.

**ASDIC:** Anti-Submarine Detection Investigation Committee, 1918-22, which developed a sonic pulse-transmitter capable of detecting, under ideal conditions, a submerged object. Technologically distinct from *SONAR*, *ASDIC* used the piezoelectric effect on quartz to produce ultrasonic pulse. With an audible carrier for operator's ears: this distinctive 'ping' is one of most the recognisable WW2 sounds, & one of the most recognisable, if not identifiable, sounds of 20<sup>TH</sup> Century.

**ASV:** Air-to-Surface-Vessel *RADAR*; UHF, 10cm  $\lambda$ , later 3cm.

**ASW:** *AntiSubmarine Warfare*; aircraft or ships specially converted or constructed.

**ASWORG:** USN ASW Operational Research Group. See *OR*.

**B-Dienst:** *Funkbeobachtungsdienst*: Wehrmacht radio-monitoring & cryptographic service.

**BdU:** *Befehlshaber der U-Boote*: Headquarters, Submarines, *KM*.

**BLACK GAP:** Areas of Atlantic beyond the range of shore-based ASW patrol aircraft before April 1943, when *VAA* & escort-carrier [*CVE*] coverages met.

**BoA:** in this thesis, the *Battle of the Atlantic*, campaign fought 3.9.39-7.5.45, & named as such by Churchill 6.5.41.

**Bofors:** Swedish-made 37mm or 40mm rapid-fire cannon. Licence-built with *Oerlikon*, became universal AA/anti-submarine gun for all sides.

**Bold:** *KM* effervescent decoy: contained chemical which produced mass of bubbles *ASDIC* returned echo from.

**Bombe:** Unofficial term for the Polish-designed electromechanical scanning machines constructed at *BP* for analysing *Enigma* codes, due to the continuous ticking they made when operating.

**BP:** Bletchley Park: Buckinghamshire mansion NW of London where British *GC&CS* was based and *Enigma* codes were analysed and eventually broken.

**CAMShip:** Catapult Aircraft Merchantman: 2<sup>ND</sup> of 4 measures to give convoys organic air cover: obsolete fighter mounted on catapult on bows of *MV* to provide '1-shot' defence of convoy against patrol or anti-shipping aircraft, 1941.

**Capt:** Captain.

**CC or CoCom:** Coastal Command (RAF).

**Cdr:** Commander.

**CinCWA:** Commander-in-Chief, Western Approaches Command, RN.

**CNO:** (USN) Chief of Naval Operations: Admiral King, USN, 1941-45.

**CNWA:** Canadian Northwest Atlantic: RCN-controlled Operational Zone after mid-1943, controlling 50% of *BoA* escorts.

**Comm:** *Commodore*.

**Commerce-Raider:** Warship designed or ship converted to attack Merchantmen, not enemy warships or submarines.

**COMINCH:** Commander-in-Chief, US Fleet. (Fleet-Admiral King, USN, 1941-5.)

**Condor:** Focke-Wulf Fw-200; modified airliner with guns, bombs, enhanced structural strength & range, for VLR convoy detection, guiding *U-B* to convoys, & shipping attack, operated by *I-Staffel*, *KG-40*, *LW*: but *KM* controlled.

**CVE:** USN designation of Carrier-Vessel-Escort: *Escort Carrier*, which see.

**DC: Depth Charge[s]:** explosive-filled 450-lb drums with hydrostatic detonator rolled over stern, lobbed from beams of ASW vessels or dropped by aircraft, to destroy submarines. Principal ASW weapon 1916-45; weak Amatol filling later replaced by Torpex, which raised lethality. Lethal radius still measured in feet, even if delivered accurately. Superseded by *Acoustic Torpedo*.

**DEMS:** *Defensively-Equipped Merchant Ships*: ships so equipped or RN personnel for maintaining & training *MN* gun crews.

**Drumbeat:** Translation of *Paukenschlag*. It actually means a 'hit', not a 'roll', on the drums.

**Enigma:** German commercial encryption machine adopted by all German armed forces in 1926. Based on multiply-positionable combinations of 3 [later 4 & then 5 of 8 interchangeable] rotors, plus a plugboard, *Enigma* offered millions of combinations of letters, supposedly beyond contemporary capabilities of manual decryption. See further *Ultra*.



**Escort-Carrier:** last & most effective of 4 measures to give convoys organic air cover: small carriers converted in UK, US & Canada from MV hulls & operating small numbers of ASW patrol a/c & fighters under austere conditions.

**Escort-Group:** ASW vessels trained [theoretically] to operate as a group in defending convoys & attacking *U-Boats*.

**FCS:** Fighter-Catapult-Ship: 1<sup>ST</sup> of 4 measures to give convoys organic air cover: converted MV in RN with 2 obsolete fighters mounted for 2 '1-shot' missions against enemy patrol or anti-shipping aircraft. Like *CAMship* aircraft, FCS aircraft were only fighters, not ASW, & could be used only once, the pilot ditching alongside, or parachuting hopefully to recovery by an escort. Once US entered war & *MACships* & *CVE*'s gradually became available, *FCS*'s & *CAMships* reverted to Merchant ships or became depot/transport vessels for Landing-Craft.

**FdU:** *Führer der Unterseeboote*: Commander, Submarine Force; Commodore, later Admiral, Dönitz 1939-43; then Admiral Friedeberg, 1943-45.

**Fireman 1<sup>ST</sup> Tindal:** senior Asian stoker, over stokers, under a *Serang*.

**Foxer:** Simple acoustic decoy (several bars on chains) streamed aft from escorts to seduce *GNAT* seeker heads.

**GC&CS:** Government Code & Cypher School: Brit. military cryptanalytic & cryptological establishment; the "Golf Cheese & Chess Society". See *Ultra*.

**GNAT:** (RN) German Naval Acoustic Torpedo, known in *KM* as the T5 *Zaunkönig* ("Wren"). Could only home on vessels moving at more than 7kt & less than 25kt, & also susceptible to *Foxer*, which diminished their effect. As they were designed to hit escorts, tacit acceptance of the loss of German supremacy in the BoA, as MV had always been, & still were, more important targets than escort vessels. Allied *Acoustic Torpedoes* were also developed, & used effectively against *U-Boats*, principally by ASW aircraft.

**GRT:** Gross Registered Tons: internal volume of a vessel: allowing 1GRT = 100 cubic ft.

**Guerre de Course:** [French] "War on trade": war on merchant shipping as practiced historically, & ultimately by *U-Boat*'s.

**Hedgehog:** Stop-gap ahead-throwing weapon to counter 'dead zone' between loss of contact by *ASDIC* of *U-Boat* [as escort passed overhead] & when *DC*'s could reach their detonation depth from the sides or stern of the escort. Developed against strong opposition from official channels in Adm; fired 24 contact-fused depth bombs in pattern ahead from bows at shallowly-submerged *U-Boat*. Contact-fusing meant bombs did not detonate without striking the *U-Boat*.

**Huff-Duff:** HF/DF: High-Frequency Direction-Finding: locating ships &/or *U-Boat*'s by receivers in multiple vessels or shore-stations taking bearings on their radio transmissions.

**Hydra:** Cypher used on the *Enigma* machine, using 3 rotors to create complicated encryption of messages.

**Hydrophone:** underwater microphone forming passive *SONAR* in all navies. During WW2 more used by *KM* than Allies, & used since by everyone, as Passive *SONAR*, which unlike Active *SONAR*, does not disclose your position.

**KK:** KorvettenKapitän: *KM* Commander [as German Army stipulated their ranks must be higher].

**KM:** *Kriegsmarine*, "WarMarine", Germany Navy 1935-45.

**I-St, KG-40:** 1<sup>ST</sup> Staffel, Kampfsgeschwader-40, Luftflotte-5: 1<sup>ST</sup> Flight, Bomber-Squadron-40, (AirFleet-3) of *LW*, operating Fw-200 *Condor* VLR patrol/anti-shipping a/c, from Bordeaux-Merignac, France & Stavanger, Norway, 1940-44.

**KpLt:** Kapitän-Leutnant: Lt.Cdr. "Herr Kaleu".

**KTB:** Kriegstagebuch: "Day-war-diary", *KM* log kept at sea by ships & *U-Boat*.

**KzS:** Kapitän zur See: Captain. Derived from Army system, where a military officer always had to outrank his Naval equivalent.

**Lascar:** Brit.EMP generic term for E.African, Arabic or Indian engine or deck personnel, hired by local agents & subordinate to designated seniors, replicating honour, duty, caste & allegiance-system ashore.

**LL:** Lend-Lease: US Govt Act of Mar.1941 granting war supplies to Allies without demand for payment during war. 50% went to UK, c.25% went to USSR.

**LRE:** Long-Range Escort: Fleet destroyers with converted boilerrooms for fuel & *DC* space for transAtlantic escort.

**Lt:** Lieutenant.

**LtCdr:** Lieutenant-Commander.

**LW:** Luftwaffe: German Air Force.

**MACship:** Merchant-Aircraft-Carrier: 3<sup>RD</sup> of 4 measures to give convoys organic air cover: Bulk carrier or tanker with superstructure cut down & flightdeck added to give extremely-austere external aircraft-operating capability [without hangar spaces] for ASW & fighter aircraft, 1942-4.

**Milch-Cow:** [properly *Milchkuh*] Specially-built *U-Boat* [typ-XIV] for refuelling & rearming *U-Boat* at sea. All sunk as priority by WAC & USN.

**MN:** Merchant Navy (term already in use unofficially before adoption in UK in 1928).

**MOMP:** Mid-Ocean Meeting-Point: south of Iceland, where RN & USN [later RCN] exchanged escort responsibility.

**MRA:** Maritime Royal Artillery: Brit.Army regiments, with RN *DEMS*; anti-raider & AA gun-manning on Merchant Ships.

**MS:** Merchant Seaman.

**MT:** Motor-Tanker.

**MV:** Merchant Vessels, ships or otherwise; Motor-Vessel.

**NM:** Nautical Mile, 6,080ft [1' of longitude at equator] as against land mile of 5,280ft.

**Oerlikon:** Swiss-made 20mm rapid-fire cannon; along with *Bofors* became ubiquitous AA gun when manufactured under licence by Allies and Germany.

**OIC:** Operational Intelligence Centre: which compiled intel on *KM* & tracked *U-Boat* via sightings, *HF/DF* & radio intercepts.

**OKM:** OberKommandoMarine: German Navy High Command.

**OKW:** OberKommando Wehrmacht: German MoD/DoD & Combined Chiefs of Staff of the armed forces, 1933-45.

**ONI:** (USN) Office of Naval Intelligence, equivalent of Admiralty Intelligence Sections, *not* OIC.

**OP-20G:** USN Operational-Group 20G; equiv of Adm. *STR* & *BP*.

**OR:** Operational Research: scientific, tabulated, statistical & other investigations of convoy & escort tactics & technology intended to improve efficiency of personnel & systems, & increase lethality of weapons, sensors, & vessels.

**Paukenschlag:** "Drumbeat", codename of 1<sup>ST</sup> *U-Boat* operation off US coast following German Declaration of war on US. *Paukenschlag* is a single hit of the drum, not a "roll on the drums."

**PBY:** USN designation of Consolidated Aviation *Catalina* medium-range ASW patrol aircraft.

**RAAF:** Royal Australian Air Force.

**RADAR:** Radio Detection And Ranging: UHF radiowave pulse-detection system, now ubiquitous; developed and perfected during WW2.

**RAdm:** Rear-Admiral.

**RAF:** Royal Air Force.

**RAN:** " Australian Navy.

**RCAF:** " Canadian Air Force.

**RCN:** " Canadian Navy. **RCNR** /Reserve **RCNVR**/Volunteer Reserve.

**Reichsmarine:** Germany Navy 1919-35.

**RN:** Royal Navy (gentlemen AND seamen).

**RNR:** Royal Naval Reserve: non-Professional [non-seamen] reserve of Navy personnel (gentlemen, not seamen).

**RNVR:** RN Volunteer Reserve: Professional [MN] reserve of Navy personnel (neither gentlemen nor seamen).

**RNZN:** " New Zealand Navy.

**RNZNR:** " " " Reserve.

**RNZNVR:** " " " Volunteer Reserve.

**S-Boot:** "Schnelboot", German fast attack motorboats used to raid coastal convoys: the British termed them E-[Enemy]Boats, as they have become known.

**Schlüssel-M:** (*Marine-Funkschlüsselmachinen*): *KM* version of *Enigma* encryption machine for telex & wireless communications.

**Serang:** Chief Asian or *Lascar* seaman, when lascars employed.

**S-Gerät:** *KM* equiv of *ASDIC*, *Sond-Gerat*: "Sound-Apparatus": active *SONAR*.

**SigInt:** Signals Intelligence, the collection of enemy & neutral radio communications. Part of ComInt, (Communications Intelligence) & in combination with cryptography, RadInt (RADAR Intelligence, collecting the specifics of their power, type & characteristics) & more recently Telint (Telemetry Intelligence), a vital part of finding, & understanding enemy intentions force levels & deployments, so that combatants can be despatched to monitor or attack enemy activities.

**SKL:** *Seekriegsleitung*: German Naval Staff.

**SLoC:** Sea Lines of Communication: "Sea Lanes", & other inadequate concepts for describing convoy routes.

**Snorkel:** [properly *Schnorchel*] Dutch-invented breathing-tube allowing submarines to refill airtanks & run diesel engines when at periscope-depth, enabling them to proceed less observably at speed while submerged. *KM* adopted 1943 from one found in a shipyard.

**Snowflake:** Illumination rocket fired by escorts to illuminate convoys during *U-Boat* attack, before *RADAR* widely available.

**SOE:** Senior Officer, Escort: in charge of the Naval *Escort-Group* or *Groups* defending a convoy.

**SONAR:** *SOund Navigation And Ranging*: USN-developed underwater detection equipment: with poorer-shaped dome; meant less passive [listening] capability than *ASDIC*, used magnetostrictive effect upon electrified nickel instead.

**Squid:** RN codename for 3-barrel mortar throwing full-sized *DC*'s ahead of Esc, allowing it to maintain contact with U-Boat while delivering attack, & turn away from underwater detonations; previously *DC*'s had to be discharged over the stern (creating blind-spot 'dead zone' in *ASDIC* beam as escort passed over submerged U-Boat) of fast-moving Esc to avoid damage to escort by detonation. Developed 1942-3, & deployed 1944, though not in great numbers by VE day.

**SqnLdr:** Squadron Leader: RAF, RAAF, RCAF.

**SS:** Steam-Ship.

**STR:** Submarine Tracking Room: Section of Adm. in London run by Cdr. Rodger Winn QC which tracked & distributed *U-Boat* locations from sightings, U-Boat attacks, *MV* sinkings, & *HF/DF* contacts.

**Support-Group:** RN, RCN & USN ASW vessel groups operating semi-independently round convoys to strike at *U-Boats* when *U-Boats* found convoys. Generally moved from threat-area to threat-area, or between one threatened convoy & another, instead of remaining with a single convoy throughout its voyage. Formed when escort-vessel numbers permitted from Nov. 1942; but not deployed [due to use on Operation *Torch* ASW patrol] in Atlantic until March 1943, when their presence, along with *VAA* & *CVE*'s, proved decisive in only 5 weeks, after 46 months of war....

**TBS:** *Talk Between Ships*, VHF radio for co-ordinating escorts.

**Triton:** ("Shark" in *GC&CS*), Enigma U-Boat cypher, using 4 rotors instead of 3, intro'd Feb '42, not broken by *BP* till Dec. 1942.

**U-Boat:** Unterseeboote, "under-sea-boat", German submarines, generally of a few mass-produced types: *VIIA-C*, of 750T, 17kts/7 submerged; *IXB-D* of longer range, 1,100T, 17kt/7kt; *Type-X, XIV* "Milch-Cow" Tanker; & *Type-XXI, XXIII* Ocean & Coastal types of hydrodynamic design, Snorkel-fitted standard, expanded battery capacity, & high (17kt) submerged speed; developed but not deployed early enough to affect the loss of German supremacy in the Atlantic.

**Ultra:** UK codename for intelligence derived from cryptology of German *Wehrmacht* & *KM* codes produced by *Hydra* & *Triton* cyphers on the *Schlüssel-M* encryption machine, commercially known as *Enigma*. Investigated & broken in principle by Polish intelligence 1926-39, Britain & France inherited these in July 1939 & further mechanised decryption at *BP* [*GC&CS*], accidentally inventing digital computing along the way. Eventually yielded concurrent transcription of *KM* codes, tho' major blank times & complexities of *Enigma* made depth & breadth of penetration less than has been supposed. *HF/DF* yielded more rapid & more valuable positions of *U-Boats* long before expensive decryption yielded actual plans.

**USA:** United States of America.

**USAAF:** US Army Air Force (not an independent service till 1947).

**USAR:** US Army.

**USCG:** US Coast Guard: quasi-military coastal surveillance, weather & customs service.

**USMC:** US Marine Corps, soldiers in the Navy.

**VAA:** in this work, abbreviation for *VLR* ASW a/c, which see.

**VAdm:** Vice-Admiral.

**VLR:** Very Long Range aircraft, on ASW patrols.

**WAC:** Western Approaches Command: set up in 1940 in Plymouth under Adm. Dunbar Naismith, later moved to Liverpool, under Adm. Sir Percy Noble 1941-2 & Adm. Sir Max Horton 1943-45, for co-ordinating escort & support forces for convoy duty around UK, & into Atlantic.

**WATU:** Western Approaches [Command] Tactical Unit: anti-U-Boat school at WAC HQ, Derby House Liverpool, where classes & simulators largely 'manned' by *WRNS* were run for escort officers.

**Wehrmacht:** German Army.

**Western Isles, HMS:** Base at Tobermory, Scotland where RN & RCN Esc crews were trained & retrained convoy escort duty & ASW tactics in their ships.

**WESTOMP:** Western Ocean Meeting Point, where WAC & CNWA esc met & exchanged responsibility for convoys.

**WRNS:** Women's Royal Naval Service: Units comprising transport, admin, training, operational research & other vital duties including working of convoy & submarine tracking 'Plots' at WAC, STR, Adm, WATU, etc, & naval bases.

**Z-PLAN:** G. Adm. Raeder's construction plans to supplant Anglo-French Naval supremacy, intended for war in 1944-48.

## MEMORIALS FOR THE LIVING

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Captain Donald Macintyre DSO DSC RN, Capt. Jackie Broome DSC RN, Vice-Admiral Sir Ian Campbell KBE CB DSO RN, Capt. Frederick John Walker CB DSO\*\*\*RN, Nicholas Monsarrat RNVR, Sir Ludovic Kennedy, & the other men who brought alive the Battle of the Atlantic to a man whose *father* was being born as it reached its climax; Canadian professors Marc Milner & Michael Hadley, who lead the vanguard of both the adolescence of Canadian Atlantic Campaign history & its historiography.

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The Battle of the Atlantic was the dominating factor throughout the war.  
Never for one moment could we forget that everything happening elsewhere,  
on land, at sea, or in the air, depended ultimately upon its outcome.

Churchill

ON the face of it the three entries in a seaman's last discharge book seem bald statements.

MT *Inverlane*, no.159816; 5493 tons; Port of Registry: Glasgow; Engaged: 19.9.39;

Rating: Steward; Conduct: Very Good; Description of Voyage: Foreign.

Only the 'Discharge' heading gives any hint of a tale:

14.12.39, Vessel Abandoned, 55°05'N, 01°07'W.

M.V. *San Adolfo*, 164464; 4376 tons; 4500 hp; Port of Registry: London; Engaged

29.2.40, Greenock; Rating: Sailor; Conduct: Very Good; Description of Voyage: Foreign;

Discharge: 18.6.40, Plymouth.

S.S. *Oakcrest*, 171313; 3277 tons; Port of Registry: London; Engaged: 20.7.40,  
Glasgow; Rating: Sailor; Conduct: Very Good; Description of Voyage: Foreign.

It is the 'Discharge' column that says it all, sums up both the voyage and the adjustment the Merchant Navy had made by a year and more into the Battle of the Atlantic: a handwritten scrawl, not water-stained or blurred, for this is a *replacement* book, not an original, and paid for, but nonetheless hasty and brief:

*17W, 53N, 25.11.40, at sea.*

Although there is a sense of urgency, an abruptness and approximation to the figures, they do not reveal what happened. These details are 'extracted from log and list'; i.e from one held ashore of the seaman's signing-on details, not from the discharge book itself. Family oral history holds that *Oakcrest* was little more than a coaster, built for the Mediterranean. Certainly she was pressed into long trans-ocean service only by generous Government insurance cover and the fact that the U.K was losing to enemy action over a quarter of a million tons of shipping a month. In peacetime *Oakcrest* would probably have been quietly rusting away in some backwater, too small and old to be venturing profitably anywhere, let alone the North Atlantic. Instead, with a single, probably pre-Great War gun on her stern to ward off surfaced German

submarines - the U-Boat of the second of two dreaded World Wars - no armour protection, and with forty crew and a single RN DEMS ["Defensively-Equipped Merchant-Ships"] gunner, she had plied her way across 'the pond', perhaps once, perhaps several times. To Halifax, Nova Scotia, and on to New York, through the U-Boat-infested Western Approaches to the British Isles, through the dreaded 'Black Gap' where there were no Royal Navy escorts or long-distance aircraft cover. Like *Inverlane* and hundreds before her, she had perhaps survived the outward journey, and come home safely once already. This trip she was heading out, a member of convoy OB-244 for New York, torpedoed with six others, in the early morning of 23<sup>RD</sup> November 1940; one by *U-103*, five in five hours by *U-123*.<sup>1</sup>

At this time RN escorts were still few, overworked, poorly-trained, lacking radar and radio-interception equipment, and limited by low radius to escorting merchant ships in convoy a few hundred miles from the coast. A single overarching RN Western Approaches Command would not be set up till the following February. RAF Coastal Command air patrols and escort were also few, limited in range, and lacked radar and accurate navigation. They had no weapons capable of dealing with a U-Boat, surfaced or otherwise. Comparatively sluggish U-Boats like *U-123* were safe. Their newly-adopted tactics were to operate in groups: *rudeltaktik*: "wolfpacks", and to loose torpedoes from the surface at night, where they were all but invisible to ships or aircraft.

The discharge book's bald statement does not say *Oakcrest* was underpowered or too small to be convoying. Tonnage suggests age: ship designs tended to get larger, rather than smaller, as crewing numbers and running costs were little greater for 10,000tonners than 5,000 tonners, little greater for 5,000tonners than 3,000tonners. She may even have served under another name, or many, prewar, and in the Great War. There were plenty of pre-Great war vessels in the decidedly 'greying population' of the British Merchant Navy. Nor does the Discharge Book say, as family oral history does,

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<sup>1</sup> Slader, J, The Red Duster At War, William Kimber, London, 1988, p.92.

she was carrying steel plate, torpedoed, and sank in only seven minutes. Two of the crew got into a lifeboat which was lowered and fell astern, and were never seen again. Those still alive got into the second lifeboat, one man, James Campbell, jumping from the side of the ship and breaking another man's collarbone.

The North Atlantic in winter is still feared and respected in a way no other frequented route is, save Cape Horn. Under Lloyd's Register, and on the Plimsoll Line which shows the safe loading marks and the correct waterline, there are six marks: TF, F, T, S, W, WNA: Tropical Fresh, Fresh, Tropical Salt Water, Summer Salt Water, Winter Salt Water, and WNA...Winter North Atlantic. These marks show just how deeply a ship can safely be loaded in water of varying temperature and salinity, and thus density and displacement. Only the North Atlantic in Winter has a whole Plimsoll mark to itself.

In the North Atlantic, in winter, continually taking water over her sides, the boat drifted North-East for between eight and eleven days. Twelve men died of exposure and injuries in that time, including the man with the broken collarbone, and were consigned to the deep. Some were in clothing needed by the living, some not. In a storm, the boat, still with a foot of near-freezing seawater washing round in her, sighted land, and the boat made the shore one 'dark and stormy night' in December 1940. By chance, they had fetched up, off a narrow gully, on the island of Barra in Scotland's Outer Hebrides, but not before two more men, in sight of safety, let slip their hold on hope and died.

The boat did not even safely beach in the narrow rocky gully, on a storm-racked coast surrounded by cliffs. "It looked fearsome on a quiet sunny day with a one metre swell. At night in a storm it must have been like a giant washing machine full of boulders."<sup>2</sup> At the last moment it broached, side-on to the sea, capsizing, hurling the exhausted survivors into the water, and crushing two. The men, all frostbitten, collapsed onto the beach. After eighteen hours, from dark until mid-morning, two still on their feet went for help at a farm half a mile away. They were only a couple of miles from the main settlement, Castlebay.

By a last, vicious, twist of fate those from the farm who came back with the survivors recognised one of the men who had died earlier, John McKinnon, not consigned to the deep because the rest were too weak and cold. Had he held on but a little longer, that night he could have been by the fire in his own home there on Barra.<sup>3</sup>

Some survivors died still on Barra, and were buried above the beach under four slim granite headstones, with the Merchant Navy (MN) crest.

W.Whitty (from Waterford)	W.Daley	W.Carr	M.Fenton
Bosun	AB	Fireman & Trimmer	1 <sup>ST</sup> Radio Operator
SS <i>Oakcrest</i>	SS <i>Oakcrest</i>	SS <i>Oakcrest</i>	SS <i>Oakcrest</i>
1 December 1940 Aged 39	1-2 December 1940	1 December 1940	1 December 1940

The six survivors of forty-one rested and were sent home.<sup>4</sup> James Campbell's replacement Discharge Book (charge 2'6d), was signed on 15 January 1941. All the survivors had greivous exposure injuries - what had come to be called Immersion Foot, the result of limbs unavoidably kept in near-freezing water for days or weeks. James Campbell lost both legs below the knee to frostbite, and only preserved his hands through the ordeal by keeping them tucked in his armpits. He spent a year in hospital with double pneumonia. After amputation he received tin legs, though the doctors said he would never walk again without sticks, from the age of twenty-four. Jim said "I'll never walk with the bluidy things!" and threw them away. He was and remained an obstinate man. As the war ended he took a night school course in accountancy, with a wife and two children to support. In Glasgow, near Blackpool, and then in Kent he worked as such, until his death in 1977, seeing

<sup>2</sup> Alan Campbell, pers.comm; notes for the author, 1998, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Barra itself got into the news some six months later when a ship, *SS Politician*, wrecked on nearby Eriskay during a whisky shortage, carrying something in the order of 20,000 cases [240,000 bottles/200tons] of Whisky, most of which mysteriously disappeared in the following weeks...Inevitably fictionalised, by Compton Mackenzie, the book was called Whisky Galore, as was the movie, a masterpiece of the contemporary Ealing Tradition, and as much a cinema classic in its time as The DamBusters. The sequel, both an artistic and commercial failure, was called, naturally enough, Scotch On The Rocks! The last 14 bottles sold at auction in Glasgow for £12,012 in 1993.

<sup>4</sup> "I would give a lot to have the letter written to Jim's mother by the doctor on Barra in 1941.", Alan Campbell, op.cit.



his heart's desire, Sydney Heads once more from a ship, during a visit to Australia in the summer of 1975-6.

By November 1940 James Campbell was already, unlike many merchant seamen who had joined up 'for the duration', no stranger to either the sea or disaster. Running away to sea from Glasgow at age 16 in 1932 like his elder brother John before him, he had travelled the world under the 'Red Duster', the ensign of the British merchant fleet. It had always had this flag, never seen as a navy, or an arm of the state, from within or without. Only the Great War had given it even the merest indication that such status or position could exist. At the commencement of war in September 1939, Campbell was in port, joining a ship a fortnight later, sailing, perhaps in convoy, to Abadan outside Khorramshahr in 'the Gulf', bound Invergordon on the Firth of Forth with 12,694 tons of fuel oil. We have already seen her fate: 14.12.39, 55°05'N, 01°07'W, vessel abandoned. Somewhere off Newcastle the ship, a motor tanker, ironically built in Germany only three years before, was mined, probably by one air-dropped by the Luftwaffe. Close to shore, in autumn, they got to land safely, save four killed by the explosion, and the tanker broke in two, the aft section beached off Whitburn Steel. Later the fore half was used as a blockship, sunk at Longhope in May 1944.

Campbell's next engagement was another tanker, for another company, signing on to the ship as all men did; not to a ministry or to a government department, but to a ship and a company, while the company took the insurance for the voyage, and the government requisitioned the ship and filled it with cargo by way of the Ministry of Wartime Transport, the MoWT. MV *San Adolfo* came and went to her destination safely, though family members say she was bombed in port somewhere; records and oral history do not report. James Campbell said "the bomb fell, the captain's boot-soles disappeared between the deck rails and I thought 'if its good enough for him, its good enough for me.'" This type of danger-disarming tale, shrugging off the tension and shock of a loaded tanker being bombed while stationary alongside in port, is typical of MN and indeed all war stories and adventure tales related by men the world over. Such narrative styles kept the reality of war at bay.

Campbell was an ordinary seaman inside the concrete-slab wheelhouse (cannon-shell-proof) when the vessel was strafed.<sup>5</sup> Somewhere in the North Sea during their return from abroad, they met an already famous destroyer with an already famous captain: HMS *Kelly*, commanded by Mountbatten. *Kelly* had been torpedoed, her back almost broken. Campbell always spoke of being at the wheel when the ship's master used a loudhailer to enquire "if there was anything we could for you sir?" Mountbatten replied "No - quite all right, carry on."<sup>6</sup> His ship would live - and he managed to bring her safely to port, her starboard rail awash, where she was repaired and continued her short, eventful life. 'Batty' and *Kelly* were immortalised in 1942 by Noel Coward's film In Which We Serve. *San Adolfo* continued on her way.

Engaged in February, Campbell was discharged in June at Plymouth, the ancient port of William Bligh's birthplace two centuries ago, and long before, that of Drake. Four months of waiting followed. War had not yet caught up with trade and the needs of rapid loading and unloading of goods and fuel. More time, space and opportunity were lost in delay and/or mismanagement, as well as repairing damage, than action. Later *San Adolfo* would almost play another small part in the fame and mythology of the Battle of the Atlantic: she was again in convoy in May 1941, and nearly earmarked to refuel at sea RN warships pursuing the German battleship *Bismarck*, the last great gamble of oceanic surface commerce raiding by the Kriegsmarine.

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<sup>5</sup> He would always later recall the roof and wall blocks clicking, back and forth, against one another, as the ship rolled.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

For Campbell, the period after *San Adolfo* was another wait; part rest, part itching to get to sea again where seamen belong, as they put it, before signing on to *Oakcrest* in July 1940, and apparently an unusual longer wait (July-November) before heading out in OB-244 to be sunk only a few days later. Men, if their ship came back, tended to leave and rejoin another, or the same one, with leave and rest in between, if only for a few days. Companies did not like men living aboard in port, no matter where. Conditions were poor, and companies notoriously tight with money. Seamen tended to prefer the change, any change, to remaining where they were.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Campbell took a shore job awhile before growing tired of it, or merely wanting to be back at sea. Seamen were literally ten a penny and could, even in wartime, be got easily. Later in the war would come shortages, propaganda, encouragement, strikes and protests over pay and conditions, mass refusals to serve in certain ships or for certain companies. Later in the war also would come better pay and conditions, the end of the old, hated Navigation Act ruling that stopped men's pay when their ship was lost. There would be sufficient escorts, weapons and sensors, sufficient tactics, sufficient strategy. All this was in a future James Campbell never took part in. All of this was a future that need not have been necessary had such measures been taken prewar, to provide better ships and better accommodation, better training, better tactics and strategy, better escorts - any escorts.

James Campbell received for his wartime efforts and injuries the 1939-45 Star, which was awarded to all combatants and people involved closely in the war; the 1939-45 medal, for wartime service bravery; and the Atlantic Star, the campaign medal which all in the Royal and Merchant Navies serving in the Atlantic received: a simple straightforward five-pointed star, with a blue-green-grey ribbon, the colours of the Ocean they had fought upon. He also received a Mention in Dispatches, and the Oakleaf on the Atlantic Star Ribbon that signified this. Notification, when it came, was in suitably appropriate language, the like of which Drake, Nelson and Churchill had used:

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<sup>7</sup> Hay, D, *War Under the Red Ensign*, Janes, London, 1982, p.169; Lane, T, *The Merchant Seaman's War*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1990, p.77-8, 82-3.

Admiralty, Whitehall,

19th February 1942

Sir,

I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you that They have learned with great pleasure that on the recommendation of the First Lord the Prime Minister has obtained the King's approval for the Publication of your name in the London Gazette as Commended for good services in *S.S. Oakcrest*, in action with the enemy. A copy of this letter has been sent to the owners of the ship.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,

H.V. Markham

Such language, to a mere able seaman! To *you*, from Sir Henry V. Markham, Permanent Secretary to the Board of Admiralty. One can almost imagine, as one is no doubt intended to, the collected lords and leaders of the Royal Navy clustered round a table, pondering the story of your sacrifice and singling it out for attention amongst a million others. "It is with baubles that men are led," said Napoleon, and though he was anything but a sailor, the idea holds true. Even today, half a century and more on, the language, itself of another era, and the tone, still "stiffens the sinews and summons up the blood!" as Henry V put it. The weight and worth of five centuries of maritime tradition lies visibly upon the typed page like a pronouncement from on high - from, indeed, Their Lordships Of The Admiralty.

In common with almost all Great War and Second World War ex-servicemen, Jim rarely spoke of his experiences, even the prewar ones, to family or friends. Fourteen months in the Battle poisoned eight years of varied maritime life. The few tales passed to his son are the only record of his times at sea, as he left no written record, though he may have written one in common with other veterans, had he lived into the Anniversary era.<sup>8</sup> Until recently almost all have been silent, save senior men who published their

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<sup>8</sup> Law in Howarth, S, & Law, D, [eds], The Battle of the Atlantic, Greenhill Books, London, 1994, p.599.

memoirs in the years following the end of hostilities. For almost all Merchant Seamen, and most naval and air force personnel, a long silence descended over and around them and their life at war. Compared to the very many accounts of administration, operations, technology and famous events, mundane and ordinary experiences were neither popular nor sought after. The sensational and extraordinary were posed as the norm. Outside these, there would be silences about the bravery, fortitude, and losses of seamen as well, compared to wartime official and media publication and promotion of their lives and times. For all their limitations, such limited propagandist wartime works at least promoted memory. Postwar, only seamen themselves wrote of their experiences, in ways which nonparticipants could read but not fully comprehend.

The reader will note many things are deliberately missing from the Preface. There was no exposition of life in the boat: what the survivors would have done, eaten, said, sung, or thought. How they died, of what, and when, was not in the tales Jim passed down. They remained locked away from the world in his own memories, probably too harrowing to tell. The ethnic and social composition of the crew is unknown. There are no non-British names among the dead, save Reinwald, probably Norwegian. Nothing in this preface was synthesised or imagined from the mass of 'lifeboat literature' which festoons especially British MN accounts of the Battle. There is deliberately no gender, ethnic or class history in this account because it is restricted to what little could be found about Jim, the ship, the U-Boat, the events, and the time.

Commanded by KorvettenKapitän Karl-Heinz Moehle, *U-123* was a large, long-range type IX U-Boat. These were intended for ocean commerce raiding, in distant waters: the central and South Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. Prewar, like all U-Boat designs, but gradually improved by the challenge and response of combat, they were typical of the many versions built between the wars, for various roles. They were slower to dive, and less manouverable, than the favoured type VII, of which most U-Boat production was comprised, but they had greater range, as much as 11,000 nautical miles, and the space

for the stowage of food and extra torpedoes which made long-range missions possible and profitable.<sup>9</sup>

Moehle, born 31-7-1910, had joined the pre-Nazi German Navy, the Reichsmarine, in 1930, and served in surface vessels before shifting to the Nazi-era Kriegsmarine's illegally developed and burgeoning U-Boat arm, in 1936. As such he was a member of a select elite, not only in pay and training, but also in that he shared equally the discomfort and danger and all-enveloping life of his ordinary submariners. He had commissioned a new small coastal type IIB, *U-20* in 1937, after serving as a Warrant Officer in two smaller training boats. He had had a good war by late 1940, sinking 8 ships in six wartime patrols, mostly in the North Sea, before the prestigious commission of *U-123*. *U-123* was to be his last front-line command, and in her<sup>10</sup> he sank the remainder of his 22 ships for 94,710 tons, before posting to a shore command, of the 5<sup>TH</sup> U-Boat flotilla at Kiel, and then of the U-Boat base there. Arrested in June 1945 and tried for passing on to his subordinates the infamous "*Laconia* Order", he served five years, being released in November 1949.<sup>11</sup> He was one of the luckier commanders of the U-Bootswaffe, remaining ashore later in the war, when other commanders were sent to sea, either to make up losses, or simply to bolster morale, and were lost in the great U-Boat culls of the last years, when Allied Anti-Submarine Warfare technologies had outstripped the U-Boat, and convoy defences were not the porous shields of November 1940.<sup>12</sup>

*U-123* was also a charmed boat. Begun in April 1939, and commissioned in May 1940, at the height of the Dunkirk crisis, *U-123* spent his entire war career in the 2<sup>ND</sup> flotilla at Lorient in Occupied France. It was from these ideal, invulnerable bases that the legendary U-Boats motored, in myth and reality, to decimate Allied shipping. Passed by Moehle to Reinhard Hardegen, in May 1941, who took him to the Eastern coast of the USA in the

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<sup>9</sup> Rössler, E, *The U-Boat: Evolution & Technical History*, A&A Press, London, 1981, pp.103-5, 150-1.

<sup>10</sup> Or rather him, as German and Russian parlance refers to ships and boats in the masculine.

<sup>11</sup> The *Laconia* Order stemmed from a U-Boat's rescue of survivors of a ship containing Italian PoWs, which was bombed by an Allied aircraft, prompting a ban on further assistance of Allied survivors, & a hinted policy from Hitler of deliberately killing them, against the Geneva convention. U-Boat Head Admiral Dönitz quietly disagreed, and was not convicted postwar for this order or its interpretation.

first German attacks on that coast, *U-123* opened Operation *Paukenschlag*: paraphrased by western historians as “Drumbeat”. *U-123*, under Moehle, Hardegen, and von Schroeter, damaged four ships of 31,000tons and sank 47 merchant ships of 244,000tons, and a submarine. He was decommissioned at Lorient in the aftermath of the D-Day landings, scuttled to prevent Allied use in August 1944, surrendered in 1945, and raised to serve in the French Navy till 1959.<sup>13</sup>

*Oakcrest* is far less documented. There is no company history of Crest Shipping nor inherited corporate records. Where or when she was built, and her engine and worth remain a mystery. When torpedoed, she was in an outbound convoy, carrying no cargo, but ballasted, hence her tonnage of 3277, not the maximum 5407 according to Lloyd's War Losses. She was not carrying steel plate, these were a precious import, not a mere ballast. Her ballast “was probably steelworks slag: it was an easy way to get rid of it.”<sup>14</sup> The story of *Inverlane* and *San Adolfo*, too, was not exactly as Jim told it. *Kelly* was torpedoed, but in the North sea on 8 May 1940, in action with her flotilla against German torpedo boats and destroyers. It is hardly credible a slow motor tanker, with 12,694 tons of invaluable fuel aboard, would stop or be allowed to stop, in the middle of a sea battle where torpedo-carrying fast attack craft had just seriously damaged a fast warship. *Kelly* had been mined in December 1939, in the North sea, right after her commissioning, going to the aid of a tanker which had just been mined. It is far more likely that fallible memory confused the two incidents. Jim remembered the mining, and Mounbatten's conversation with *Inverlane*'s master, but not the date.

Two things should be made clear, both about this story and the Battle of the Atlantic as a whole: the inaccuracy of shipping records, partly due to different tonnage definitions, and the fallibility of human memory and oral history. *Oakcrest* wasn't a coaster, merely old and outdated, wasn't carrying steel plate, but in ballast, and both the date and time of sinking vary: 22/11,

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<sup>12</sup> At <http://www.uboat.net/men/moehle.htm>

<sup>13</sup> At <http://www.uboat.net/boats/u123.htm>

<sup>14</sup> Alan Campbell, op.cit.

23/11 [British vs German Zone time], 25/11. Perhaps 20 died in the lifeboat: excluding the inevitable deaths from the torpedo hit, the pair lost astern in the first lifeboat, as well as the four definitely buried in lonely graves on Barra, visited by James' son, (the author's father) in 1993. There are 25 names from *Oakcrest* on the Tower Hill Memorial in London, for those 37,701 British merchant seamen, of both World Wars, who have no known grave.<sup>15</sup>

These facts are not meant to undermine the credibility of Jim's story, nor to present 'the actual historical truth'. Absolute truth does not exist in any objective sense. These family tales were not intended as history. They had a different function. They preserved and recalled the events as the participants remembered them, not as officialdom or analysts would later, 'working in tranquility after the fact'. As such they functioned mythically. These stories included only what the participants considered important. They were the essence of the experience. Moreover they were therapeutic, the collection, arrangement, reuse and reworking of powerful traumatic memories into oral narrative with a highly personal purpose. They told the tales of fear and surprise and humour and worry, and of poor pay, food and conditions, the way the participants remembered it. The addition of documented fact does not invalidate them, nor make the tales better or less mythical. The mindset of myth formed and the force of the memories drove the accounts, even among those participants writing after the war. They knew the facts, and knew the difference between myth and reality, yet these tended not to modify their feelings or impressions about their experiences or those they wrote about for the consumption of the public.

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix III.



## CONTINUITY AND MYTHOLOGY: THE BATTLE DEFINED

"Here there was no semblance of meaning...the emotions were so many and mixed up they were indecipherable...  
Nothing had been decided, nobody had learned anything."

James Jones, The Thin Red Line

This thesis focuses on the changing representations in different national and cultural traditions of the Battle of the Atlantic. During and after the Great War, new mythologies evolved from existing maritime ones to explain new experiences to naval and merchant seamen, airmen, civilians, governments and industries. This was expanded during and after the Second World War by more participants and authors. The work of Canadian Professor Michael Hadley serves as this thesis' departure point. Both his 1995 Count Not the Dead on U-Boat iconography and his 1996 chapter "The Popular Image of the Canadian Navy" analyse mythology in press, documentary, cinema feature, history and fiction.<sup>1</sup>

Myth is integral to meaning and perspective.<sup>2</sup> Myth can explain how and why representations are created, even where authors consciously assign little meaning. Myth is one way authors turn experiences into representations. For participants of the Atlantic Campaign who became authors, myth was how they understood and communicated what they had done and seen. It has become how we have seen and comprehended these events. Myth is not wrong, or false. It is the processing reality is given to make experience vicarious, communicable, and open to all. For participants, myth tended to serve in place of meaning. For most of them the Battle had no 'meaning'. Most did not hate the enemy, nor did love of country motivate them or validate their actions. "Men saw the necessity of war, but objected to camouflaging this under a spurious cloak of patriotism: they were doing what they were told and would be shot if they did not."<sup>3</sup>

There have been hundreds of representations of the Battle. The mythic forms they took, and the limited meaning most were given, created a broad rather than deep stream of works. A paradox ensued, a complicated group of simple, related representations. Within this stream have been currents, all

<sup>1</sup> In Hadley, M, Huebert, R, & Crickard, F, A Nation's Navy: In Quest of Canadian Naval Identity, McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal, 1996, p.35-56; Hadley, M, Count Not the Dead: the Popular Image of the German Submarine, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Myth is not a deception. It cannot be removed in order to merely debunk a view of events.

<sup>3</sup> MacLean, A, HMS Ulysses, Collins, London, 1955, p.212.

heading in the same general direction but divided between myriad types and sub-types of representation. These different experiences and views were related and mixed, to produce each distinct representation in separate works.<sup>4</sup> This thesis examines media representations of all the participants in the Battle, not merely the public record of merchant seamen.<sup>5</sup> A subsidiary intention is to explain how participants, especially merchant seamen, were relatively neglected, losing postwar support and recognition. "If one had to select a single man on whom the survival of the country depended in the darkest days of the War, one could do worse than Adm. Sir Max Horton RN, who as Commander-in-Chief, Western Approaches Command, bore the brunt of the submarine attack at its height; but who outside the RN [or now indeed inside] has ever heard of him?"<sup>6</sup> War memorials explicitly commemorate the dead, only implicitly the survivors. Representations must serve as memorials also for the living, for they outnumber war dead, and their problems endure.<sup>7</sup>

Fussell's Great War & Modern Memory depicted a crisis of incredibility and incommunicability on the Western Front.<sup>8</sup> This can also be seen in works about the Atlantic campaign during and even more after the Second World War. There was a crisis of description. The experiences were rarely recounted without resort to melodrama and hyperbole. There was a crisis of terminology. Mostly the tools already available in military and maritime works were used to examine experiences. These were limited by service attitudes and ideas, methods and forms, or by the requirements and forms of fiction. The campaign itself is open to myriad definitions. Its myths took diverse forms, within various services and nationalities. They were divided into Allied myths about 'the Battle', and German myths about the U-Boat. These were also broadly split into myths held by participants, and myths about them. German myths and some Allied ones were traditional (hero) myths, others were about events and conditions. All created new relationships with events. Almost all

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Poolman for instance produced after 1960 a variety of novels, memoirs, popular histories, technical accounts and even screenplays.

<sup>5</sup> In this thesis, 'merchant seamen' is shortened to 'seamen' while 'sailors' are 'naval seamen'. "Merchant mariners" and "merchant marines" are misleading. Many ordinary people do not know who this refers to: merchants [businessmen], mariners [seamen], the US Marine Corps, or sailors [not soldiers] therein. 'Merchant seamen' is at least unambiguous.

<sup>6</sup> Howard, M, The Causes of Wars, Unwin, London, London, 1983, p.209.

<sup>7</sup> For practical reasons Memorials exclude those survivors who died postwar from Rolls of Honour, but these often mutilated or emotionally injured survivors are also casualties. McKernan, M, Here Is Their Spirit, Uni. of Queensland Press/AWM, 1991, p.257, 258-9.

participants felt the war had no meaning beyond serving the state, or defeating Nazism: doing their duty, in an unpleasant situation. Very few held it to be a sacred or special task, as Great War sacrifice had become.

These men recorded their experiences and perspectives. The events largely had no 'deeper' "Meaning", but they were important. These experiences were powerful, transforming, traumatic or exhilarating watersheds. The most significant moments of their lives drove the representations. Writing about the events and experiences gave a purpose, a personal position in the greater field of national war aims. Their experiences seemed so significant they ought to have a deeper, more spiritual, more sacred meaning. "So demoralising was this repetition" of war "within a generation that no one felt it appropriate to understand or explain it."<sup>9</sup> Their "Limited poetry and prose suggested a reluctance to indulge in patriotic, bombastic, and easily falsifiable prophecies of triumph, peace, and universal justice."<sup>10</sup> "War might be necessary...but pre-1914 heroics about it were contemptible."<sup>11</sup> Already exposed to the senselessness and futility of the Great War, these authors knew better than to look for 'higher "meaning"'. They wrote of what they had done and seen, and were able to come to terms with it. They wrote not for themselves, but for an audience who could never comprehend these experiences without experiencing them themselves. Often awareness of how little the public understood or empathised caused bitterness. Often participants were plaintive about 'collective amnesia': public ignorance, misunderstanding, being relatively less recognised for their service and sacrifice. Ultimately they could only write for themselves, for each other, for relatives, in the hope they might understand, not the public who had been moved by earlier war epics. Judging from the number and diversity of works, they were largely successful. A great number of readers gained vicarious experience of commerce warfare at sea. For the writers this was the most important part. For them the essence of the experience was expressed.

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<sup>8</sup> Cited in Calder, A, *The Myth of the Blitz*, Jonathon Cape, London, 1991, p.16.

<sup>9</sup> Fussell, P, *Wartime*, Oxford University Press, London, 1989, p.133.

<sup>10</sup> Calder 1991 op.cit p.150.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.151.

It is irrelevant that there is little artistic, literary or cinematic depth in many Battle representations. Each work was constructed a certain way for a purpose and an intended audience. Many works were commercial, while others were for official purposes. Control by institutions and their values and ideologies had some impact. All fitted within genres, both fictional and factual, and writers often rigidly adhered to such distinguishing features.<sup>12</sup> Telling a story well was usually significant, unlike newer types of history. "Postwar historiography was strangely adverse to narrative."<sup>13</sup> Again, rigid adherence to convention made a large number of similar, purely operational and technical accounts or adventure fictions, with little innovation or individuality. Atlantic Battle writings are indicative of the minimal change in twentieth-century maritime writing that Raban has described.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the enormous body of writing about the Battle, its content remains both incomplete and generally lacking in theoretical sophistication. Change and innovation in historical, fictional, documentary and cinematic works have been gradual but cumulative. This was because the representations usually stated what participants required, no more and no less. Only later did other, nonparticipants, find deficiencies in the stories and methods, and searched for new perspectives, new approaches and new answers, appropriate for themselves in new times. Many of these new authors were professional, and they brought fresh direction and rigour to study of the campaign. Academic works have been relatively few, though their influence is growing.<sup>15</sup> Raban states

"writing about the sea in the 20<sup>TH</sup> century needed fresh understanding, a shift of knowledge or sensibility to liberate it from the 19<sup>TH</sup> century masterpieces to which it is in thrall...the gap between the lay reader, the lay writer, and the professionals of the sea widens...The Cruel Sea is much the richest and most complicated of its author's books."<sup>16</sup>

Many postwar writers escaped from peacetime austerity and mediocrity by reenacting earlier voyagers. "One could stitch together sentences from Smeeton and Pye, McMullen and MacGregor without a seam."<sup>17</sup> "Their ships and men are new, but their water is 19<sup>TH</sup> century. Their books have a focus on storms"...they are content to recycle the language and iconography of their

<sup>12</sup> See the taxonomies in Ch.1.

<sup>13</sup> Calder, A, Revolutionary Empire, 2<sup>ND</sup>Edn, Pimlico, London, 1998, p.536.

<sup>14</sup> Raban, A, The Oxford Book of the Sea, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p.30-1.

<sup>15</sup> Academic books, articles and conference papers comprise roughly ten percent of the total historical output.

<sup>16</sup> Raban 1992 op.cit p.30.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p.31.

predecessors." Authors "laboured under an exhaustion of descriptive metaphor."<sup>18</sup> Recently new studies have begun to take effect.

This thesis brings together isolated, compartmentalised national studies and their mythologies to define ways to advance study of the entire campaign.<sup>19</sup> Both authors and audience were rather separate from the mainstream public. Servicemen and civilian seamen of each country were divided. The problem has not been one of overall coverage or general view. There have been several sophisticated accounts that deal both in context and detail with the international, tactical and human dimensions of the Battle.<sup>20</sup> These have only appeared in the recent past, when large bodies of primary and secondary sources became available. The human dimension has never been lacking, as evidenced by the enormous number of mythic memoirs and personal accounts. Technical histories may have been intended merely to analyse equipment developments, while neglecting the human dimension. Memoirs emphasised personal experiences without, as Zimmerman lamented in 1994, exploring the relationship of technology to personnel, and thus how and why operational use and misuse of technology affected the Battle.<sup>21</sup>

The vicarious experiences offered by participant-dominated works could have been more representative: closer to the actual connection between action and mundanity, between the exciting and the ordinary. All dimensions could have been represented better, especially by professional historians and academics in recent decades. More representative writings earlier might have made the Battle a more appealing subject for academics.<sup>22</sup> Until recently, general accounts of the war ignored seamen and peripheralised sailors - the 'fighting' men at sea. More specific histories and fictions focussed either on naval actions, or on equally mythologised attacks and sinkings in convoy, excluding the vast majority of mundane experiences. The importance of

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.33.

<sup>19</sup> One contribution of academic conferences has been to bring together separate national services and their traditions.

<sup>20</sup> Costello, J, & Hughes, T, The Battle of the Atlantic, Collins, London, 1977; Tarrant, V.E, The U-Boat Wars 1914-45, Arms & Armour Press, London, 1989; Terraine, J, Business In Great Waters: The U-Boat Wars, 1916-45, Putnam, NY, 1989.

<sup>21</sup> Zimmerman, D, "Technology & Tactics" in Howarth, S, & Law, D, The Battle of the Atlantic: 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary International Naval Conference, Greenhill Books, London, 1994, p.476.

<sup>22</sup> It is still uncertain why the Battle was not more appealing to academics earlier. One reason may be that academics simply worked in other areas [politics, social history, labour relations, ethnicity, gender] while writers about the Battle were not in professional or academic positions. It took a while for

convoy-escort, merchant navies and seamen, and their social and cultural aspects, to seapower throughout the past was marginalised. "Fictions seemed more real than the actual".<sup>23</sup> Postwar feature film was action-centred, unrepresentative, and almost entirely outside the myths. It contained deceptive myths of another kind: that war was about battleships, or mainly about conclusive battles, not steady attrition. The Battle of the Atlantic was anything but these.

This thesis artificially divides representations into three eras of British work and two German, including changes and continuities in style, content, focus, and other important characteristics. US and Canadian writing are less periodic. Continuity and change in novels is explored; especially the commercial pressures on them absent from histories. The few cinema films set in the Battle made after 1945, and the two films made since 1960 are examined. Their content, intended audience and purpose, and critical and commercial success are compared with the mainstream war films of their eras. Factual documentary and reconstructive efforts in television between 1945 and 1999, are also examined.

Chapter One defines the Battle's mythologies, and methodology: terms, techniques, and types of representation. Chapter Two illustrates the 'prehistory' of these representations in Great War, Interwar and Second World War works. Both Atlantic Battles (1914-18 and 1939-45) were revolutionary for sea warfare, yet their representations remained rooted in tradition. It introduces the new forms that emerged under the duress of war. Chapter Three deals with the first postwar phase, 1945-60, illustrating the definition of the Battle's themes in history, fiction, feature, documentary and memorialisation. It shows the detailed knowledge of few and considerable misunderstanding of most, without a broad middle ground. It also discusses the gradual change that followed.<sup>24</sup> Chapter Four is the most problematical section, describing the minimal developments but many diversifications during

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academics interested in the Battle to emerge, and to give this form of naval history credibility, once enough 'space' for it in 'serious' history was created.

<sup>23</sup> Raban 1992 op.cit p.11-13.

<sup>24</sup> Chapter Three also explains what the Department of Trade, Board of Trade, Admiralty, Government, and their equivalents did, according to their needs and requirements, irrespective of 'justice': adequate commemoration, and the other needs of dead and living merchant navy participants, compared to servicemen.

the comparative lull in activity between 1960-74. Chapter Five relates the marked change in focus and interpretation [with limited changes to content], and the impact of the release of previously secret material, especially related to Ultra, after 1974. Chapter Six relates the changes during and after the Fiftieth Anniversary era 1989-95, and some possibilities for future research.

"Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens."  
 "Against stupidity even the gods fight in vain."

von Schiller

All history is to some extent mythical. This author's concept of Atlantic Battle myths developed from Calder's Myth of the Blitz. Blair's Hitler's U-Boat War: The Hunters identified naval mythologies involving the Battle but merely regarded them as deceptive and did not explore them further. This provided a stimulus to combine the methods and perspectives of the former with mythical material from hundreds of works like the latter. Myth is more than deception. The mythologies have been embedded in representations: history and fiction, and cinema and television documentary. No extensive historiography of postwar work has been made, comparing and contrasting national, chronological, and media variations.

From the very beginning, mythology was present in the language, tone, style, content, inclusions and exclusions. These changed slowly over time. Attacks and sinkings were portrayed as innumerable and continuous. They were described in terms of shock, horror, danger, and trauma. They were less frequent in reality, save in critical months. War was presented as intruding on peaceful lives. Histories, novels, documentaries and cinema features concentrated on action, not a balance between it and mundanity. There was no admission the vast majority of experiences were mundane, but that representations concentrated on action. There were remarkably few variations on themes, with all books presenting most or all types of a select set of events and experiences. Some were always included, some infrequently, some in one genre but not others.

"It is the function of the 'historian proper' to discover and record the complicated and disagreeable realities" of war: to explore myth.<sup>1</sup> The sources are rarely profound, limited by the lack of meaning assigned by participants. What remains profound is the force of the events they mythologise, and the power these mythologies hold over their creators, audience and times. Myth promotes reassurance, resisting reason and argument. "For many of us, the 'myth' has become so much a part of our lives it is anguish to be deprived of it."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Howard, M, "the Use and Abuse of Military History", op.cit, p.189.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.190.



By "dipping things in myth we see them more clearly."<sup>3</sup> Calder [1991] showed how Blitz myths were created. Myth was a belief or conception, held by survivors, participants, relatives and 'the interested'.<sup>4</sup> Myth-making was "the creation of an image of the past, through careful selection and interpretation, in order to create or sustain certain emotions or beliefs."<sup>5</sup> This was the dictionary definition of myth: reducing, understanding, comprehending and managing events, placing oneself within them and the context of the times. It was not the conventional sense that "myths are lies."<sup>6</sup> Calder defined 'nonmyth' as neither supporting nor attacking a myth, while 'countermyth' actively debunks and critiques mythic style, tone, and content.<sup>7</sup> Explorations such as this thesis have a problem using secondary sources. It means defining, exploring, and remaking representations - being non-mythical and counter-mythical -simultaneously, from the same sources. Ross' seminal 1985 The Myth of the Digger provided a definition that the Battle or any event can be placed in. She described myth as "a legend built up as an ideal-type out of what the myth-makers themselves deem to be the most important features of the experience...to them the truth of the myth in any particular instance is irrelevant...What matters is that an essence is expressed, a distillation of important truths."<sup>8</sup> "To anyone looking back today at the First AIF, much of what has been written about it seems truly mythical, in the sense that it is an ideological, perhaps fanciful, elaboration of the facts perceived by historians and commentators."<sup>9</sup> Mythic history, then, is the essence of the experience. It can promote an ideology in place of meaning. Some representations are more mythic than others, depending on how the experience elaborates the facts. This does not make it less accurate or more wrong.

Ideology played a smaller role in Battle myths than in the Great War, except in Germany. For most participants, the myths were about experiences and war aims, not meaning. For the British, ideology enveloped both

<sup>3</sup> C.S.Lewis, in Time & Tide, 14.8.1954, cited in Carpenter, H, The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, A&U, London, 1981, p.445.

<sup>4</sup> Calder, A, The Myth of the Blitz, Jonathon Cape, London, 1991, pp.xiii, 2, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Howard 1983 op.cit, p.188.

<sup>6</sup> C.S.Lewis, during the "Long Night Talk", 03:30am, Sunday, 20.5.31, cited in Carpenter, H, J.R.R. Tolkien A Biography, Allen & Unwin, London, 1977, p.151.

<sup>7</sup> Calder 1991 op.cit, p.177.

<sup>8</sup> Ross, J, The Myth of the Digger, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1985, p.13.

<sup>9</sup> Ross 1985 op.cit, p.115. The 1<sup>st</sup>AIF was Australia's famous Great War [Gallipoli, Pozeieres] ANZAC division.

participants and readers in an existing relationship with the sea, sea warfare, and British seapower. For Canadians the Battle had more to do with defining new relationships to the sea via existing relationships with the land, as well as defining a Canadian identity. Raw farmers and other landsmen from the provinces were sent to sea and became sailors. For Americans, the Battle represented war aims: supporting and then joining the forces against tyranny. In Germany existing ideas about masculinity, duty and service were recapitulated, and later criticised, through the vicarious experience of U-Boat warfare.

"The Somme is a dense and impenetrable insular British mythology."<sup>10</sup> Exactly the same isolation and parochialism was long prevalent in Battle myth. The representations of almost all nations until recently [except at academic conferences] were myopic and insular.<sup>11</sup> Allied participants could not and did not remember from the German perspective or vice versa, for all the vicarious experiences that representations provided. The British treated it as *their* battle: for survival. Canadians ignored, neglected and forgot it until the 1980s. The Germans, as defeated practitioners of submarine warfare, were separate, cut off by culture, language, and their concentration on U-Boat iconography. The Americans either downplayed the Battle in favour of the Pacific, or concentrated on the convoying of their troops and separate hunter-killer operations. Their trade convoy escort contributions during the neutrality period were comparatively unrecognised and unrecorded. The similarity of the Pacific submarine war to German U-Boat efforts had little effect on American interpretations of the Battle. Likewise accounts of British submarine warfare on Axis shipping never seemed to mix with Atlantic anti-submarine warfare. While servicemen could recognise other services and other nationalities, finding comradeship among men who had fought in different arms, ways, and on different sides, this only slowly filtered to the books. Seamen as a group were not insular, but once separated back at

<sup>10</sup> Terraine, J, The Smoke & the Fire: Myths & Anti-Myths of War, 1861-1945, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1980, p.108.

<sup>11</sup> Indeed it could be said history conferences have been attempts to bridge gaps and bring participants and perspectives together. We have however little idea of how the public responds to what it is reading.

home, among workers, returned soldiers, airmen, and sailors, were a distinct and detached minority.

Myth can be a basis for National Identity. The Battle was only used to create or sustain it in wartime.<sup>12</sup> The Blitz myth and the 'People's War' served the British. The Merchant Navy's myths fitted neatly into these accounts of stoic civilian courage under fire. Yet postwar it was largely ignored. The Battle was scarcely used as earlier epic naval and maritime narratives had been.<sup>13</sup> It was too complicated and dependent on secret new technologies, anonymously used.<sup>14</sup> It lacked sufficient glamour or grandeur to be equated with earlier epics. There was little, by comparison, for American identity, compared to the Pacific, or to the Bomb, or the drive through Europe. Canada stood to gain greatly from the Battle, in using its newly expanded navy's responsibility to define itself among the Allies. Postwar Germany associated the Battle only with defeat and destruction; either forgetting and/or looking forward. This was in contrast to personal identity and heroicism, which U-Boat men clung to. Only Britain had connections to the Atlantic at war of past and present. Yet its 1939-45 Battle was not connected, or demonstrated well enough.

These mythologies originated during and after the Great War among seamen and government and naval bodies in Britain and Germany. All responded to and rejected a century of unchallenged British maritime supremacy and late nineteenth century naval theory. Mahan's groundbreaking naval histories from 1890 focussed upon 'classical' battlefleet-confrontations, yet stated commerce-warfare was almost as effective if used by lesser nations to weaken the strongers' economy.<sup>15</sup> The Royal Navy failure to execute Mahanian ideals successfully was blamed for the Great War's protracted stalemate between rival fleets. Submarine

<sup>12</sup> Although as many have pointed out, the RCN was defined by its Atlantic service. See Hadley et al 1996 op.cit, p.53.

<sup>13</sup> Sir Henry Wood's "Fantasia on British Sea-Songs" during the annual Last Night of the Proms is today perhaps the last vestige of public British sea-power and historical Naval awareness.

<sup>14</sup> Such as Radar, SONAR, HF/DF, acoustic torpedoes, Ultra, Magnetic Anomaly Detection.

<sup>15</sup> Rodger, in Rodger [ed] *Naval Power in the 20<sup>TH</sup> Century*, Macmillan, London, 1996, pp.xvii-xx.

warfare on commerce meanwhile made them obsolete.<sup>16</sup> Actual experiences of sea warfare were romanticised and made unrealistic.<sup>17</sup> Germans created separate hero myths to comprehend their defeat after successful Mahanian trade-warfare.<sup>18</sup> U-Boats were undefeated in 1918, but unable to sink ships in great numbers, despite their continuing undetectability.<sup>19</sup> Great War commerce raiding conditioned Second World War myth. Surface raiding was initially considered more serious by both sides and conditioned their strategies. Delay in convoying, impotent escorts, and technological limitations caused high shipping losses to submarines. Financial stringency, strategic and tactical delusions, and pacifism also prevented adequate rearmament, leading to a larger, longer near-repetition of the Great War's Battle.

Only propaganda materials benefitting the war effort were made during the Second World War. Censorship prevented much negative material, but "even a pessimistic terrifying story was better than unmediated actuality."<sup>20</sup> After the war, general historical and public perspectives and attitudes on the war as a whole were defined. These have not evolved significantly.<sup>21</sup> There was little documentary material in this time. Maritime cinema, though containing the Battle in periphery, did not support its central myths. General public and service myths about sea warfare were dominant. Wartime propaganda and postwar military and cultural need bred ideas rarely subject to analysis or examination, as much technology was kept secret postwar, and codes and ciphers were kept secret even longer. The memories of the comparatively few Allied participants were dwarfed by those of the majority of the population: they had been in factories, the Blitz, in the

<sup>16</sup> The lack of decisive victories over German warships at Heligoland Bight, Dogger Bank, and Jutland.

<sup>17</sup> I.e. Bone, Hashagen, von Forstner, see below.

<sup>18</sup> The real difference of 1943-45 over 1918 was that the U-Boat *had* been defeated, with new sensors & weapons; at least before type-XXI/XXIII *Electroboote* were deployed. Dipping-SONAR, helicopters, satellites, computerisation, etc. gave postwar escorts their response.

<sup>19</sup> "1941 looked like 1918", Winton, J, Convoy: the Defence of Sea Trade, Michael Joseph, London, 1983, p.156. This was what the Great War Atlantic Battle may have become, had U-Boats not sunk ships while undetectable, had ASDIC been demonstrated ineffective, without radar, HF/DF, Ultra, to assist Allies detecting and sinking U-Boats with new weapons. Perhaps *Wolfpack* and higher losses would have resulted [like October 1940], if U-Boat commanders could see they were still largely invulnerable, even when attacking convoys rather than single ships.

<sup>20</sup> Fussell 1989 op.cit p.36.

<sup>21</sup> Willmott, H, The Great Crusade: A New Complete History of the Second World War, Joseph, London, 1989, p.483-4.

army. German participants' memories contrastingly were not dwarfed by Wehrmacht recollection or civilian experience. Instead they were added to the existing celebrated and assured U-Boat iconography: hero myths of both machines and men. Not memories of the Battle per se, these changed and evolved separately.

The Blitz Myth, partially intended to secure US involvement, was created by media and political organs and survivors, for British and American consumption.<sup>22</sup> Steeped in the prewar glamour of the Royal Air Force, and fears of city-raiding enemy terror attacks, the Blitz became a symbol of resistance to Nazism. The British could be trusted to carry on fighting for freedom the way the French had not.<sup>23</sup> "Myths made sense of the frightening and chaotic actuality of war with heroicism."<sup>24</sup> By contrast, Atlantic Battle myths were and remained largely for participants (and therefore minority) consumption, though during the Second World War, and after the Great War, they had been used more widely for promoting shipping, or seamen, against the Germans, and against the U-Boat. The Germans had their own myths, of cruel Allied blockade, of the supermen who operated the boats, 'stabbed in the back' myths of betrayal by leadership.

Thus each service and nation had its own myths. They were made in the following manner:

Facts known or believed to be true were set out. There were high shipping losses. A greater percentage of seamen were killed than 'armed' servicemen. Most U-Boat personnel were killed or prisoners of war by VE-Day.

These facts were overlaid with inspirational values and convincing rhetoric. Ships and U-Boats, British seamen and equally 'Iron U-Boat Men' were anthropomorphically steadfast and brave, while the innovation, productive potential, and commitment of America encouraged these nations.

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<sup>22</sup> Calder 1991 op.cit, p.212.

<sup>23</sup> Lend-Lease, passed March 1941, arrived from 31.5.41, Ibid, p.38.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.14.

Facts which didn't fit were excluded. Actual shipping losses were not so high as to threaten the survival of Britain all through the war.<sup>25</sup> Captured enemy vessels, hired continental shipping, and shipbuilding kept ahead of losses, though security and victory were long uncertain. Only three percent of Second World War convoys lost ships, and while 574 ships were lost in convoy (of about 4700 lost worldwide and 2275 in the North Atlantic alone), 75,000 were convoyed safely, in over a quarter of a million convoys.<sup>26</sup> German leaders avoided evidence of the Allied penetration of Enigma. Postwar silence and secrecy further enhanced the status of the Ultra myth, once it emerged in 1974: a vast amount of information based on highly secret operations enabled the war to be won singlehandedly. "Myth forbids us to ask", and hence to analyse and reconsider.<sup>27</sup>

As received by and from seamen, Allied and U-Boat servicemen, the audience gains a composite myth, never seen in one place or by one author. High shipping losses and great suffering were caused by 'invincible' U-Boats, 'unprepared' navies and air forces, terrible weather, US 'intransigence', 'audacious' British domination, 'incompetent' Canadians. The German Atlantic was usually empty, attacking a convoy a dangerous harrowing experience. The Allied Atlantic was a sinister waste with U-Boats behind every wave, always able to penetrate the escort screen.<sup>28</sup> Canadian participants were neglected by all but their own recent books, their enormous contribution unrecognised. US intransigence to convoy strategy and escort tactics is largely a British myth. 'Audacious' British strategic campaign domination likewise is American myth. Blair regards the entire Battle as a 'myth', a "classic case of threat-inflation."<sup>29</sup> This type of myth counters British historiographical domination - of the writing about the fighting - while

<sup>25</sup> Bomber Command was excluded from the Blitz myth: it didn't fit the image of heroic civilians under bombardment: *ibid* p.43; 29,890 Londoners were killed by bombing 1939-45; 30,705 killed elsewhere in Britain; *ibid* p.42.

<sup>26</sup> Noble in Creighton, K, Convoy Commodore, William Kimber, London, 1956, p.11; Winton 1983 *op.cit* p.320.

<sup>27</sup> Calder 1991 *op.cit*, p.13.

<sup>28</sup> In the same way that the Blitz myth was merely brave noble fighter pilots, and cheery cockneys picking over their rubble and putting up 'busnes as usual' signs.

<sup>29</sup> Blair, C, Hitler's U-Boat War: The Hunters 1939-42, [V.1 of 2], Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, 1997, p.xiii.

emphasising US material and technological contributions. All agree on the terrible, largely un-mythical weather.

By Ross' definition, the Battle Myths served very well. The legends stated for each of the involved minorities what their ideals were, what were for them 'the important truths'. Allied navies and airforces justifiably claimed their service was instrumental to victory. U-Waffe men could claim they were doing their duty, untainted by Nazism, guilt or responsibility.<sup>30</sup> Merchant seamen could claim without fear of contradiction they were utterly vital to Britain's survival and the continuance of the Allied cause. Merchant seamen could also use their myth to portray struggles with authority over pay, conditions, and perceptions, joined to existing mythology of freedom and oppression. Myths both explained their role in the war and disarmed criticism about strikes, drunkenness, or civilian status. Myths were the essence of the experience: for seamen long hours, bad pay, a terrible risk continuously run, regarded half as heroes and half as war-profiteering army-dodgers by the mass-mobilised population from which they came. The escort myth was under-trained crews in badly equipped, overworked ships, a distinct sense of being second-best to regular, large-ship forces, a sense of impotence in the face of stealthy, piratical U-boat men, long watches, subsistence on bully-beef and cocoa. For Canadians the escort myth was compounded by technological lags, inexperience, a sense of being dragged from peace. For aircrews, myth was defined by long hours over a featureless ocean, the risks of attack, weather and mechanical trouble. U-boat myth was weeks of patrolling empty seas, the shattering hours of depthcharging after detection by escorts or attacking a convoy, the squalor and confinement of life aboard and the lionised relaxation ashore.

It is significant how many such myths stem from the early years of the war, not the latter, when equipment and conditions changed. They were however 'elaborations and fancy', most frequently and pungently seen in memoirs and fiction and not, surprisingly, in postwar feature film. This was because the memoirs were personal, and the films commercial. The

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<sup>30</sup> Either no-one was guilty, their leaders were, or as later many came to believe, Dönitz was.

memoirs were the essence of individual experience, while the films were largely representations of the state, or its perspective, in recreations of famous events.<sup>31</sup>

Myths of the tiny minority of German survivors (for 28,000 of 39,000 U-Boat men died in the Battle) made their war and defeat bearable, explicable and manageable.<sup>32</sup> They could hold the 'Tonnage War' myth, winning by sinking more than the enemy could build. Many, like Dönitz, their leader, espoused the misconceptions that "we could have won with 300 U-Boats at war's commencement."<sup>33</sup> A few, like the novelist Buchheim, still consider that Dönitz betrayed his submariners, sending them out to die when the Battle was clearly lost. Many felt betrayed by German technological failures, or defeated by Allied technology (especially Ultra), not men. They could believe that the Navy remained comparatively non-Nazi through the war, which in a sense it did. Few thought that it was as thoroughly penetrated by and entangled with earlier, more pervasive ideas of German nationalist supremacy, from as far back as Bismarck, which the Nazis drew upon and extended. Dönitz was under Hitler's spell from the beginning, but he was prepared by a lifetime's work for and upbringing in the ideals of the German state. He and his men were servants of the Reich.<sup>34</sup>

German non-participants' views were separate. U-Boat men were 'killers', like soldiers or bomber crews, taking part in an 'unjust war on civilians', or victims of politics or technology. U-Boat life, like convoy life, was a 'romantic' or 'unromantic' vicarious experience after 1945, as for most who read about the sea. Despite eventual escort supremacy, there is also a non-German myth of 'invincible U-Boats' in some quarters. Both sides supported this, only challenged by technical historians.<sup>35</sup> The few German survivors

<sup>31</sup> Both the 1952 film *the Cruel Sea* and 1971's *Murphy's War*, from novels, are exceptions.

<sup>32</sup> Costello & Hughes 1977 op.cit, p.322.

<sup>33</sup> A spring 1939 memo to the Naval High Command cited in Costello & Hughes 1977 op.cit p.34; also in Dönitz, *Ten Years & Twenty Days*, Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, 1959; and during a 1973 conversation with L.Kennedy, cited in Padfield, P, *Dönitz*, Gollancz, London, 1984, p.487. The fact that fifty Type-VII U-Boats (RM4million each) could be built for the cost of *Bismarck* (RM200million) obviously gave force to his wish that Germany have an effective, rather than balanced navy; Mallmann Showell, *U-boats Under the Swastika*, Allen, London, 1973, p.15.

<sup>34</sup> Topp, E, *The Odyssey of a U-Boat Commander*, Praeger, Westport, Conn, 1992, p.164-5.

<sup>35</sup> Or rather the deception that mythically heroic U-Boat men were beaten by technology [i.e. Ultra], not outfought.



needed to believe their submarines were the best, and the Royal, Canadian, and US Navies needed to believe they had beaten them.<sup>36</sup>

Just as there remains a hero myth of U-Boat men, there is clearly an unstated seamen's hero myth. It has the same content: iron men (now in steel, not wooden, ships), stalwart and dedicated, dutiful and brave though unassuming, embodying the best traditions of their service, and carrying national ethos in their blood.<sup>37</sup> Seamen's myths were only held by a minority, not as a broadly accepted national iconography. It was instead myth about them that was internationally known. Seamen's myths were of 'us and them': people versus seamen, pay, conditions, losses, strikes, and reasons for going to sea descended from old myths about sailors.<sup>38</sup> Both wars were uncomfortable, though not the wholesale horrors that mythic popular histories stated. Their war was like Dover's bombardment. "If London's raids were a blow to the head, ours was a gnawing toothache, all of the time."<sup>39</sup>

Shipping losses however were not continually grave. Deaths were closer to myth than tonnage, though whole-war totals blur the peaks and troughs between 1940-43.<sup>40</sup> Deaths presented per diem, per month, would not only have given a clearer sense of the ebb and flow, but also the relevance of men's worries, adding a factual core to their sailing and sinking experiences. In very few works, usually recently, have deaths been put in context with yearly shipping losses.<sup>41</sup> Earlier misrepresentation not only supported the seaman's myth of continuous terrible losses, which there were not, it also supported the general American myth that losses were never too severe and that the whole Battle was exaggerated. For the size of the Merchant Navies involved, 24% losses over the whole war was hardly inflated, considering the trials and normal risks of service at sea, wartime

<sup>36</sup> A further, minor persistent myth is that the Luftwaffe's Fw200 *Condor* aircraft (used for reconnaissance and less frequently, attacks) was a serious threat until countered. No research penetrates popular misconception to debunk this; see Ch.6: "1989-2000."

<sup>37</sup> See Lane, T, *The Merchant Seaman's War*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1990, Ch.3 pp.33-66, & 262, for national traditions and ethos.

<sup>38</sup> Kelly, I, "To Go On the Account", unpublished Honours History thesis, University of Tasmania-Launceston, 1999, pp.4-6, 45, 46.

<sup>39</sup> Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-45*, Pimlico, London, 1992 edition, p.415.

<sup>40</sup> Deaths were concentrated in the early to middle periods, dropping sharply after. Had the mid-1943 death-rate continued, overall totals would have been as startling and unforgettable as the Great War's Western Front was.

<sup>41</sup> I.e Slader, J, *The Fourth Service*, Robert Hale, London, 1994, p.324.

worries of torpedo, mine and bomb, with prejudice and discrimination. The separation between the horrific experiences of many and the mundanity of many more does not produce a tension like that between defeat and service in U-Boat works.

American pay rates and conditions were not universal. The pay rates of Canadian or British seamen were never revealed.<sup>42</sup> Some landspeople despised seamen and thought them shirkers or cowards, avoiding military service in the Merchant Navy. How landspeople in equally reserved occupations dealt with similar abuse remains unclear.<sup>43</sup> Others recognised and thanked seamen; the press made individuals heroes, and through them seamen as a group.<sup>44</sup> Seamen had been regarded as aliens and semi-criminals for centuries, an under-recognised and openly mistrusted segment of the population.<sup>45</sup> More recently, the Great War had shown that not only did the country depend on seamen for almost all its food and fuel,<sup>46</sup> but also that the Royal Navy, the much-vaunted protector of the nation of ages past, was all but impotent against submarines. The public had been given the Mahanian ideas that navies took as policy: Wagnerian capital-ship battlefleet confrontations as in the Elizabethan, Baroque and Napoleonic eras. The new style of naval warfare did not fit, and tended to be misunderstood and marginalised.

If anyone lacked traditional myths about heroes, it was the escort forces and Coastal Command. Western Approaches Command and the Royal Canadian Navy especially were presented in books and films as less heroic (merely 'defensively' escorting) than amphibious assault forces, destroyer flotillas, or battleships. The US Navy focussed on its highly successful 1943-5 offensive patrols centred on hunting U-Boats via Ultra

<sup>42</sup> Halford, R, *The Unknown Navy*, Vanwell Publishing, St.Catherine's, Ontario, 1995, p.71-6, 244-6.

<sup>43</sup> Perhaps those in reserved occupations, uncomfortable with their own noncombatant status, were the discriminators?

<sup>44</sup> Extolling the individual and mass heroism of seamen is almost universal among accounts. Lane devotes a chapter to the creation of these heroic myths, how press loaded seamen with herculean strengths and character.

<sup>45</sup> Palmer, M, *Ships & Shipping*, B.T.Batsford, London, 1971, pp.23-33, 47-56; Hay, D, *War Under the Red Ensign*, Janes, London, 1982, pp.11-13; Costello & Hughes 1977 op.cit p.34; Lane 1990 op.cit pp.103-4, 218; White, J, "Hardly Heroes: Canadian Merchant Seamen & the International Convoy System 1939-45", *The Northern Mariner*, Vol 5, N.4, October 1995, pp.19, 21-5, 27-28.

intercepts.<sup>47</sup> Compared to brave, stalwart uncomplaining seamen, and iron-jawed, crew-cut, steely-eyed Teutonic youngsters, escort crews were poor, pale, unremarkable servicemen. The Royal Navy was unprepared for the obvious U-Boat war to come. It had 'a muddle and make-do' attitude, over-reliance on ASDIC, no preparation for convoy escort. Max Hastings was to write of the Falklands campaign of 1982 "mirroring a host of others that British forces have launched with high hopes, considerable muddle and inadequate resources, redeemed...by remarkable service efficiency, some outstanding weapons systems (*which did extra duty for those that failed* [my italics: depthcharges, anti-submarine bombs, ASDIC failed; radar, Leigh-Light and Squid did not]) and the quality and courage of the men who fought."<sup>48</sup> Only after the war did the Royal Navy acquire a fairer share of what little glory was attached to the Atlantic campaign, as seen in famous Battle novels,<sup>49</sup> or more prominently, warships hunting enemy raiders, as in its films.<sup>50</sup> Coastal Command was denied an official open history due to Cold War secrecy. It suffered a silence myth, "the indignity of being ignored", peripheralised by Fighter and Bomber Commands. Coastal Command was left worse off than Western Approaches Command, though it continued postwar, its prewar duties modified.<sup>51</sup>

Royal Canadian Navy myths were of vast numbers of Great Plains civilians, presented as cowboys, under-trained and equipped, sharing the muddling attitude of its British parent.<sup>52</sup> The experience of escorting shipping with very few U-Boat sinkings to its credit accompanied the troubles of vast expansion, leading to a sense of unrecognised effort. The tiny regular navy wanted to expand and be remembered, a balanced future role. The reservists returned to civilian life at war's end. Their experiences were buried. They suffered from no voice in the postwar regular navy and a long

<sup>46</sup> From 1928 a semi-service codification as 'the Merchant Navy', with HM the Prince of Wales as "Master of the Merchant Navy & Fishing Fleets" in Lane 1990 op.cit p.22.

<sup>47</sup> The US Navy could have presented its entire Battle experience, including extensive but uneventful convoy escort before Pearl Harbor, rather than concentrating on the effective escort-carrier patrols which produced better results. US Navy policy and history emphasised U-Boat sinkings over escort duties in contrast to the stated Royal Navy goal of "the safe and timely arrival of convoys."

<sup>48</sup> Hastings M & Jenkins, S, *Battle for the Falklands*, Michael Joseph, London, 1983, p.364.

<sup>49</sup> Convoy-escort novels such as *The Cruel Sea*, *Kleber's Convoy*, *HMS Ulysses*.

<sup>50</sup> Such as *Battle of the River Plate*, *Sink the Bismarck!*

<sup>51</sup> Law "The Historiography of the Battle", in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit p.600.

<sup>52</sup> McLean, D, "Muddling Through", in Hadley et al 1996 op.cit., p.173-89.

silence about wartime shortcomings.<sup>53</sup> The Canadian navy promoted other issues, while amalgamation of the defence forces, and Canada's increasing multiculturalism further eroded interest.<sup>54</sup> Cold War anti-submarine warfare was inexplicably underpromoted despite its centrality to NATO strategy.

Given the existence of so much myth among authors and audience, there has been little controversy. Usually where there are differing, strongly-held personal myths and viewpoints, they will be contentious. There has been little fierce argument over the relative importance of US troop convoys or British trade convoys. Initial US Navy responses to U-Boat attacks after Pearl Harbor have been condemned by almost all authors. There has been minimal contention within various representations about control of airpower, in contrast to wartime competition between the services.<sup>55</sup> There are continuing inaccuracies and distortions over the US Navy contribution, especially portrayal of its role in Ultra.<sup>56</sup> This starkly contrasts with the enormous US role in escorting its own troops and supplies, aircraft and shipbuilding, and oil production, the last three clearly the largest winning elements. Other controversy - and thus myth - centres around the wholly British scattering of convoy PQ-17, and the losses this incident caused.<sup>57</sup> Unlike the successful novel and film of Das Boot, which triggered broad discussions, controversy about PQ-17 has been mainly a participant controversy, not a popular or academic one. Once the participants are all dead this will merely be a fervent 'buff' controversy, fought with decreasing relevance and accuracy by men in clubs and societies and in the pages of the press and informal journals.

<sup>53</sup> The 1949 Mainguy report also discussed serious attitude differences between officers and men; Glover in Hadley et al 1996 p.72.

<sup>54</sup> Milner "the Historiography of the Canadian Navy: the State of the Art" pp. 28-9; Hadley op.cit in Hadley et al 1996 pp.51-2, 55.

<sup>55</sup> Between the US Navy and Army Air Force, and more forcefully between Royal Air Force Bomber and Coastal Command.

<sup>56</sup> The provision of calculating technology, and *collection*, not analysis, of Signals Intelligence. As Blair points out, this was larger than previously thought, especially in the role of women; Blair, C, Hitler's U-Boat War: the Hunted, 1942-45, [V.2 of 2], Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, 1998, pp.326, 415.

<sup>57</sup> This Arctic convoy was scattered because the Admiralty could not be sure whether Norwegian-based German surface ships were at sea. Without anti-submarine or anti-aircraft escort, 75% of PQ-17's ships and cargoes were lost to U-Boat and air attack.

The largest problem the Battle has, in historical perspective and cultural meaning, except in Germany, is mass ignorance - 'collective amnesia' - , not mass mythologising and distortion.<sup>58</sup> The vast majority of Europeans and North Americans are less aware of the Battle than more prominent campaigns, as they are of the Chinese-Japanese war, the only Second World War campaign which was more protracted. Participants even by 1968 were "a tiny minority who have lived on into an age when numbers and votes, pressure groups and self-seekers, sensation and scandal drown the small voice of those who served selflessly and faithfully."<sup>59</sup> Battle myths arose partly in response to that 'collective' or 'popular amnesia'. These helped make bearable the sense of injustice felt by Allied participants, especially seamen.<sup>60</sup> This resulted from the campaign, which underpinned all others in the West, receiving less than its postwar due of recognition and commemoration. Government and other lobbies had more power and influence than individuals, or absorbed and deactivated commands. Other commands and services merely promoted 'their bit': other campaigns and battles. It was not a case of exclusion. They had better powers of persuasion, and more exciting stories to tell. They were remembered better than the Battle and its participants.<sup>61</sup>

There is a lag between representation and popular image. "Popular image is a composite pattern of public perception and media representation."<sup>62</sup> An accurate public perception would depend on knowledge of most representations, and awareness of their parameters and values. Analysis of works demonstrates how they are written, not how they are read.<sup>63</sup> Milner's 1996 chapter "The Historiography of the Canadian Navy" continued earlier efforts to publicise Canadian contributions.<sup>64</sup> His papers in Runyan & Copes [1994] and Sadkovich [1990] unintentionally expose the disconnection

<sup>58</sup> It is not possible to ascertain the size and scope of the vicarious German audience: even the size or diversity of the representations cannot indicate what is read.

<sup>59</sup> S.W.Roskill in Winton [ed] *Freedom's Battle: the War at Sea*, Volume One, Hutchinson, London, 1967, p.401.

<sup>60</sup> Speaking or writing bitterly of their neglect and peripheralisation was simultaneous with discussion of service and experience, and the vital part played by merchant services and navies.

<sup>61</sup> Relative neglect, especially in Canada, as newspaper and other reports indicated. Hadley in Hadley et al 1996 op.cit pp.51-2, 55.

<sup>62</sup> introduction in *ibid*, p.8.

<sup>63</sup> Kelly 1999 op.cit, p.36-9, 44.

<sup>64</sup> Milner "...The State of the Art", in Hadley et al 1996 op.cit, pp.23-34.

between Naval activity and public awareness. Milner still had to define and describe RCN historiography for his audience. These were conferences of service personnel, historians, and academics. Such specialists as these were more aware of RCN heritage than the public. The proof of Canada's relative lack of awareness of the Battle [and also tentatively of Britain's and America's] is articles like Milner's. He was not presenting RCN heritage to a general audience.<sup>65</sup> Only recently have the Battle and its ex-servicemen begun to get a greater share of recognition through such efforts. Memorial services have generally been attended only by participants, as with the commemorations of Canadians in the Battle held in Liverpool in May 1998.<sup>66</sup>

Each of these representations had a purpose, an intended audience. Each used narrative in certain ways, to promote the ideology of a certain group. Some had unintended consequences, such as those following the Ultra revelation, the controversy following Irving's PQ-17, or after Werner's Iron Coffins. Each was set within a tradition of maritime writing and mythology, a milieu of purpose. All wished to publicise their contribution among a mass of other military accounts, in an era of maritime and adventure stories. It was expected men would describe their service in such an important conflict. Some had other agendas. Shipping companies, Commands, and individuals had contributions to promote in official publications, or actions to defend.<sup>67</sup> Feature film makers had commercial motives.<sup>68</sup> This produced the gap between thoroughly personal memoirs, and solidly dramatic movies. These were almost all capital ship gunfire, not relationships, psychological drama, characterisation, or complicated ASW combat. They knew of no other method than myth. Lane's purpose was to explain seamen's sociocultural, not operational, position. Hadley's purpose was to evaluate the significance of U-Boat myth, and its separation from military [land] myth.

<sup>65</sup> See for instance the minimal mentions of the Navy amid Canadian armed forces entries in encyclopaedias: Introduction, Hadley et al 1996 op.cit p.3-4. General Canadian Anniversary works such as Harbron's Longest Battle [1993] are gradually making up this deficit.

<sup>66</sup> See at <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/historical/secondwar/atlantic/12-98.htm>

<sup>67</sup> Such as Broome's autobiography/incidental history of PQ-17.

<sup>68</sup> While the armed services supported their efforts for publicity and recruitment drives.

"History does not repeat itself. Historians repeat each other."<sup>69</sup> Nowhere is this more striking than the history of the Battle, especially its Arctic subgenre. The discourse of the Battle was, quite simply, stuck. Recent accounts are still overwhelmingly narrative, essentially operational history. This slow evolution is symptomatic of the entire war, with causes, origins, explanations, results, not restricted to the Battle.<sup>70</sup> No post-structuralist and little even post-operational style is in evidence. A few individual, usually counter-mythical, texts have not affected the subject. Partly what prevents evolution in memory and cultural representation about the Battle is the lack of revisionism in fiction and cinema, where most people get their 'history' from. There have been no Deighton's Bomber or Robinson's Piece of Cake: works giving us a counter-mythological view.<sup>71</sup> Buchheim's Das Boot was equally mythical, if not more, than Allied fictions.<sup>72</sup> Buchheim's detractors indulge in myth too, but theirs are based on long association with U-Boats, the Battle, and Dönitz, whereas Buchheim had one cruise as a journalist/propagandist. Like Das Boot, Piece of Cake did not remake popular Blitz myths. No revision of the Allied Battle or its participants occurred.

Authors suffered from a limited ability to communicate their experiences, used to certain forms of writing: service reports, or not at all. They added to and deepened, usually without enriching, an existing genre of reportage, phraseology and ideas. This can explain the slow change in writing since 1945. Journal articles are numerous but no more academic or non-mythical than books. Brazilian, Norwegian and Portuguese representations in addition to much German do not exist in translation, further minimising their international impact. Within their countries their prominence is limited compared to the experience of occupation or neutrality.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Howard, 1983 op.cit, p.191.

<sup>70</sup> Wilmott, loc.cit.

<sup>71</sup> Deighton's Bomber on Allied bomber offensives, Robinson's Piece of Cake on Battle of Britain fighter pilots.

<sup>72</sup> His remythologising even prompted former U-Boat men to publish lengthy refutations. Merten, K & Baberg, K, Wir U-Boot-Fahrer sagen: "Nein! So war das nicht!", Reiss, Neustadt, 1986.

<sup>73</sup> Norwegian Battle works have been less prominent than partisan experiences, while merchant navy operations were not even published before 1994. Dutch and Danish works began appearing in the

Few authors were academics. Academic theses “by and large do not exist”, which has meant “less potential impact and penetration of culture.”<sup>74</sup> Historians who had been wartime servicemen wrote official histories such as British Intelligence in the Second World War, 1981-89.<sup>75</sup> Academic history in 1999 was a long way from how it was written, taught, and learned in 1950, or 1960.<sup>76</sup> Academic attention was generally elsewhere. This deprived authors of the theoretical impetus to adopt new ideas or change views, for “a doctrine rejected by the majority of the academic community is not likely to remain tenable for very long by those school teachers and publicists who mould public opinion.”<sup>77</sup> There were no theories to penetrate culture once academics adopt them.<sup>78</sup>

While some historiographic and sociological work has been done on wartime representations, little for postwar works exists, other than brief conference papers concerned with types and quality, not their purposes or meanings, or the motives of public-relations bodies, governments, authors or audience. Varying schemes can be made dividing cultural activity and representations, extending the historiographies of Fiftieth Anniversary Conference delegates Law and Gardner, and Hadley. The following Plates 1.1-1.13 are new graphic versions of their ideas. They have until now not been cross-cultural or international. Separate languages, traditions and memories prevented such combinations.

Plate 1.1 is a taxonomic chart of Atlantic Battle representations from 1914 to the present. This chart illustrates the broad range of works, and their convergences. All representations evolved after the Great War, and underwent change due to wartime requirements after 1939. Government funding of propaganda meant cinema, documentary and news flourished

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1980s. Thowlsen, “Norwegian Merchant Navy in Allied War Transport” in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit p.61.

<sup>74</sup> Gardner in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit, p.529; Law op.cit 598; this author found six historical, not cultural, theses. Others may simply not be registered.

<sup>75</sup> Hinsley *et al*, who had written a similar short of the war at sea in 1950.

<sup>76</sup> Imagine if Australian Aboriginal, or North-American, history was still written today as it was in 1950...

<sup>77</sup> Howard 1983 op.cit p.76.

<sup>78</sup> Even this is not certain: the public view of Bligh is still trapped in a 1930 pre-Mackanness cinematic stereotyped brutal flogging captain, despite 60 years of unrelenting academic and popular effort to widen public horizons and update attitudes. Denning 1988 & 1992, Kennedy 1978 and 1989, Christian 1982, 1999, Mackanness 1936.


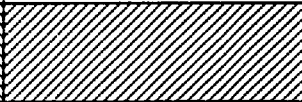
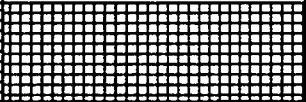




both in number and in sophistication. Fictions were restricted, while biography and official accounts benefitted as cinema did. Postwar, cinema converged with fiction in early memorable adaptations, such as the Cruel Sea, later converging with documentary to produce more limited, conventional, informative recreations of famous events, such as Battle of the River Plate, Above Us the Waves and Sink the Bismarck! Cinema has been intermittent since. Fictions diversified into a wide range of subgenres and blends. History also diversified into many types which are explained and examined below. These media began to converge in the mid-late 1990s when the Internet provided the opportunity to combine biographical, technical and operational material with images, contact addresses and sources, for commercial and memorial or remembrance purposes.

Gardner suggested a three-phase scheme for historical works, not dealing with other representations or remembrance. He divided [Plate 1.2] Atlantic Battle history into [1] Official History 1945-to mid 1950s, [2] Secondary and reminiscence, 1950s-to now, and [3] the after-Ultra period from 1974. These phases except the last are haphazard and uncertain, there being no clear changes, as for cinema after 1960.<sup>79</sup>

Plate 1.2 GARDNER 1994

OFFICIAL	SECONDARY	ULTRA
		
1945	1960	1974

Source: Gardner in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit, p.528.

Law expanded, more specifically. Plate 1.3 shows Law's division of the period into types of history. He described their growth, diversification, and the decline of several. He saw an embryonic 'post-Ultra' era after the publication of the Official History of British Intelligence, 1981-89<sup>80</sup>, and Kahn's excellent 1991 Seizing the Enigma; further reducing Ultra's power to

<sup>79</sup> Gardner in Howarth and Law, op.cit, p.528. There is no Allied or single national perspective, p.516.  
<sup>80</sup> Which stated clearly the actual significance of Ultra to the Battle.

merely one element among many.<sup>81</sup> Hinsley ought to have settled the issue, but some later books continued the Ultra myth, if only because of its glamour.<sup>82</sup> It will take decades to fade at the present rate. Hadley [Plate 1.8] divided German U-Boat myth into periods related to the World Wars and by the publication and subsequent furore about Buchheim's 're-mythical' novel Das Boot, and its subsequent cinematic and TV incarnations.

Plate 1.3 LAW AFTER GARDNER 1994

OFFICIAL/STAFF												
PROPAGANDA												
MEMOIR												
BIOGRAPHY												
SECONDARY												
GENERAL												
TECHNICAL												
CAMPAIGN												
INCIDENTAL												
ULTRA-REVISION												
ACAD/THEMATIC												
ANNIVERSARY												
	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995

Source: Law in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit p.598-600.

A few works were innovative in presentation or use of sources.<sup>83</sup> Few novels and films, and few more histories, have been defined classics. This definition depended largely on setting, penetration of culture and audience reaction, not content. Influence over other works and later perceptions was another component. Some histories are still considered valuable and current, though containing dated ideas or outdated information. The official histories are in this category, if only for their length and coverage. Some non-official works have also had long careers.<sup>84</sup> "Contemporary ephemeral" Atlantic novels flourished until recently.<sup>85</sup> Many non-historical works were peripheral:

<sup>81</sup> As did recent works such as Gannon, M, Black May: the Defeat of the German Wolfpacks, Harper-Collins, NY, 1998.

<sup>82</sup> Gardner in Howarth and Law, op.cit p.531.

<sup>83</sup> I.e Broome's use of real, raw, reproduced signals in Convoy Is To Scatter, 1973.

<sup>84</sup> Campbell & MacIntyre's The Kola Run [Muller London 1958] is in this category: even though published 40 years ago its blend of view, accuracy, content, balance, and lack of hyperbole means it continues to positively influence thought on the Arctic convoys. More recent works are less blessed with its turn of phrase, which is what makes Kola Run as memorable and classic as Morison: this "succeeds as literature, as well as narrative and analysis" as Keegan puts it. Keegan, J, The Battle for History: Refighting World War Two, Hutchinson, London, 1995.

<sup>85</sup> "Contemporary ephemeral fiction" is from Fussell 1989, op.cit p.239.

they used the Battle as a setting, but were not about it. This has been a particular feature of naval cinema: only twice, decades apart, have there been films of the Battle as it was known and fought by the majority of its participants.

Plate 1.4 fills the space in Battle historiography. It describes a new cross-cultural chronology, including all forms of media, as well as all national patterns.

### Plate 1.4: A Cross-Cultural Chronology

Phase 1: Immediate Postwar Period; 1945-60. This was the era of operational history, war movies, and general personal accounts. Very limited TV documentary commenced, the few classic novels were written, and a never-slackening stream of unrealistic commercial novels (mainly written by former participants) began.

Phase 2: Intermediate Period 1960-74. The world no longer intensely memorialised, while the flow of minority-interest material was continued.<sup>86</sup> Fiction continued to romantically mangle what the authors actually went through. Few participants complained about lack of commemoration, except to each other, and in letters to newspapers or service magazines. David Irving relit one of a few wartime controversies, a 1969 furore over his heretical retelling of convoy PQ-17, a £30,000 libel victory for the commander of its escort, and fire and brimstone at sailors' social gatherings *ad infinitum*. After 1960, cinema only twice again featured the Battle, once peripherally, and histories both popular and academic, fictions, and documentary, continued analysing events and experiences, rather than exploring the surrounding myths. Technical histories were the principal new area of activity.

Phase 3: Post-30-Year-Rule/Ultra Period; 1974-89. With the release of previously secret materials and then the revelation of vast Allied cryptological efforts, a change in direction was forced on the entire history of the Second World War; upon the Battle in particular. This moved from history to fiction, giving spy and espionage novels new foci. There was no retheorisation, evolution in perspective, or any exploration of myth. What also occurred, more in public opinion than products, was the revolution and remythologisation (not demythologisation) of the U-Boat.<sup>87</sup> The German novel *Das Boot* polarised debate about portrayal of crews; exacerbated by film and TV miniseries, cultural activities and product. Dissenters kept silent, aware of the Irving furore. Novelists continued obliterating their experiences without resistance. Canadian history of the Battle appeared, of all types - memoir, operational, technical, incidental. Canadian work had been absent since small amounts in the Immediate Postwar period.

Phase 4: 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Era; 1989-95--. Another burst of work appeared, some academic, much by former participants finally able to write of hidden trauma. More Merchant Navy history appeared among the naval accounts, with integration of German sources. The fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the war raised awareness, with the Cold War ending. Academic and professional histories grew in number and prominence. Change in existing ideas and attitudes grew. Seamen were now closer to service personnel than before, and closer to remembrance and commemoration as well. There were the beginnings of new theorisation.

The future promises greater exposure and centralisation for the Battle, in new media, especially the Internet, where there is a chance for new interpretations among blends of text, images, graphics, and improved communications between participants and the audience.<sup>88</sup> This will only happen if the Battle can avoid being swamped on this most unedited and unregulated of media, by glossier, more famous and already established topics. The most likely area of theoretic breakthrough remains academia, if recent works both nonmythical and countermythical, can be built upon without being swamped by commercial or mythical product. This will, as always, depend as much on the audience's taste and interest, as authorship.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Hobsbawm, E, *The Age of Extremes*, Michael Joseph, London, 1994, p.328.

<sup>87</sup> Buchheim was creating a new myth, not removing or opposing existing ones. Hence 'Remyth': a new use of mythology to create a separate image of events and attitudes.

<sup>88</sup> New interpretations, and innovative blends of text, images, sounds, graphics, are however not yet in evidence.

<sup>89</sup> Audiences support certain interpretations and presentations by purchasing them, inhibiting others.

Histories are divided in Plate 1.5 into many subtypes of approach and content. There are broadly three types of approach: mythical, non-mythical, and counter-mythical.<sup>90</sup> Most histories are mythical: they support the general tenets surrounding the Battle. A few are nonmythical, neither supporting, debunking or exploring myths, but merely relating a part of the Battle. Even fewer are countermythical, opposing or debunking myths. Technical histories for instance tend to be nonmythical simply because they lack discussion and narrative, focussing on analysing hardware, where myths of men and experiences are infrequent. Openly countermythical works are often little known.

Plate 1.6 describes the broad market of content of varying quality and coverage: general, official, operational, campaign, incidental, personal, biographical, and technical. General accounts covered the whole war with more or less passing reference to the Battle. In the Anniversary Era, general accounts often with scholarly contributors, received vital improvements. Significant advances in coverage and analysis were made, bringing the Battle and its logistics closer to combat in discussion, and linking Merchant Navies to armed services.<sup>91</sup> Earlier general accounts usually ignored the Battle, or had tiny, unrepresentative entries. Even current ones are smaller and shorter than encyclopaedia and dictionary-type entries on battles or campaigns. In coming decades this transfer of the Battle from minority intimate to general knowledge will pay off, but not before the last participants are dead. Books of sea battles tended to ignore the Battle, partially due to its aforementioned difficulties of representation, categorisation, scale, detail, complexity, and a lack of existing background among the audience.

Campaign histories specifically described the Battle. Incidental histories analysed one battle, convoy, or important event. Personal accounts were generally events from a single perspective, but not written as autobiography or biography [usually a whole life, not just a wartime service

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<sup>90</sup> Calder 1991 op.cit p.177.

<sup>91</sup> Such as Dear, I.C.B & Foot, M.R.D, The Oxford Companion to World War Two, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995 [contributors including Milner], and quality general historical accounts such as Overy, R, Why the Allies Won, Jonathon Cape, London, 1995.

Plate 1.5: HISTORY

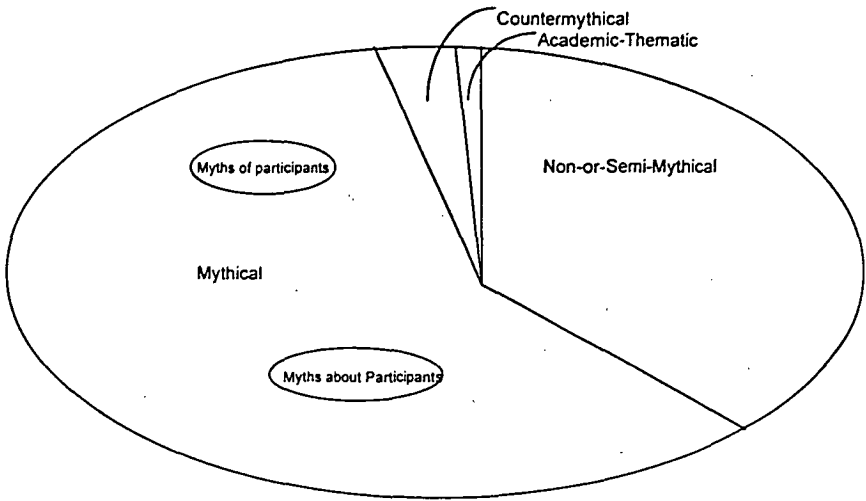


Plate 1.6: HISTORY:

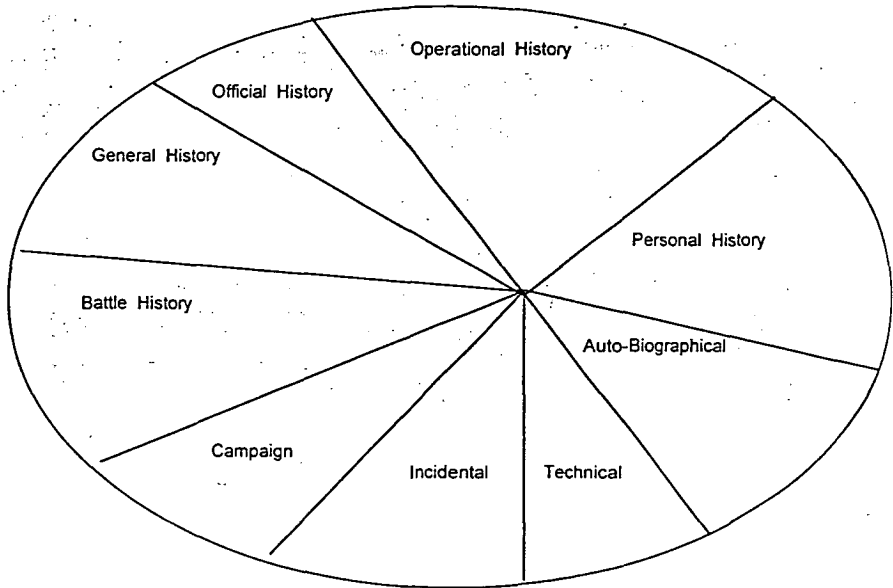
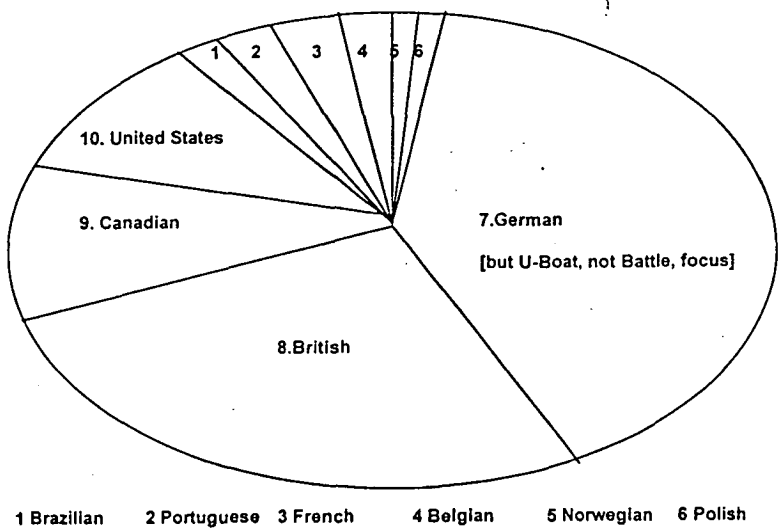


Plate 1.7: NATIONAL PRODUCTS



period].<sup>92</sup> Technical accounts covered the development and/or use of a ship, class, aircraft, weapon, or sensor. Thematic accounts covered a type of operation, of warfare, or its impact or consequences, instead of straight, day-by-day narrative and analysis of actual events, losses and gains. Operational History related the day-to-day and general strategic and tactical progress of a force, corps, detachment or other military body, within a defined theatre. Almost all were Participant History: written by those who were there.

Tony Lane, a former seaman, published a sociology in 1990, The Merchant Seamen's War, exploring its experiences, structure, attitudes, image and presentation, and wartime works about it. This study was not continued into the postwar era. His work is a template which allows us to explore wartime and prewar works about the British Merchant Navy, and apply this to other merchant navies, and to the armed services, as well as an introduction to analysing postwar works. Canadian professor of Germanic studies, Michael Hadley offers another template. His 1995 Count Not the Dead explores a century of German U-Boat works and their meanings. Hadley deals with the U-Boat since 1895, not the Battle of the Atlantic. He also deals only with the German U-Boat as a cultural icon, a rather more straightforward task [as it excludes other national traditions and operations as well as histories], but nonetheless his approach and coverage give useful foci in addition to opening up a vast amount of works otherwise closed to the English speaker. Hadley's 1996 chapter did not explore the Battle from the Canadian perspective, rather the Navy from its representations.

Plate 1.7 describes the relative contributions of national representations. These have tensions, causes, parameters, and characteristics. Norway's war and history was divided in three. Until April 1940, neutrality balanced a vast profitable merchant fleet precariously between Nazi and British requirements. After occupation its remaining Navy served, famously, within British Home Fleet and Western Approaches Command forces. In comparison to frequently terribly-equipped, trained overworked Royal Canadian Navy Escort Groups, ironically the most effective

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<sup>92</sup> see Pearce in Ch.5.

Royal Navy anti-submarine warfare group, B6, comprised Royal Norwegian Navy corvettes with a single elderly Royal Navy destroyer carrying the senior officer.<sup>93</sup> Norway's entire Merchant Navy joined the Allied war effort, contributing shipping to the Battle of the Atlantic and continued to support the Norwegian government in exile. The occupation phase divided in two: from April 1940 part freedom to trade, part support of Britain; after Pearl Harbor under-represented Allied shipping, caught between US and British requirements and politics as during the Phoney War. Limited Norwegian naval history, rarely seen elsewhere, focussed like Royal Canadian Navy history on destroyers and glamour, not escorts. Shipping management history and experiences were still being written, in Norwegian, in the late 1990s.<sup>94</sup>

The postwar Royal Canadian Navy focussed on regular actions, as it considered its escort performance too embarrassing and dull to deserve inclusion, even given its importance to NATO Atlantic strategy.<sup>95</sup> The Canadian Merchant Navy had an obscure, parochialised heritage, hampered by its shipping's seasonal nature. Suddenly created during and after the Great War, the deepwater fleet failed during the Depression.<sup>96</sup> In the Second World War, a political determination for a hostilities-only disposable merchant fleet, ensured another postwar decline.<sup>97</sup> Canadian seamen were recast from wartime heroes to postwar Communist-inspired Union troublemakers, rapidly crushed.<sup>98</sup> Royal Canadian Navy and Merchant Navy Battle experiences and commemoration were thus both denied any voice for decades. Change occurred only from the late 1970s for the Royal Canadian Navy and late 1980s for the Canadian Merchant Navy, though some restitution for the few remaining participants was provided in the Anniversary Era. Canadian historiography no longer resembles Britain's. It had fewer,

<sup>93</sup> Milner in Runyan, T. & Copes J. [ed] To Die Gallantly: the Battle of the Atlantic 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary American Historical Conference, Westview Press, Boulder, 1994, footnote 32 to p.134.

<sup>94</sup> For details see Thowlsen in Howarth and Law op.cit.pp.60-79.

<sup>95</sup> Milner in Sadkovich, J. (ed) Reevaluating the Major Naval Combatants of WW-II, Greenwood Books, Westport, Conn, 1990, p.42.

<sup>96</sup> Like the Australian experience: Campbell, I, All In The Same Boat, Australian War Memorial, Historical Research Section, Summer Scholarship paper, February 1996.

<sup>97</sup> To a certain extent this could be said to be the British and US experience as well: mass shipping, like tank production a wartime expedient, not a long-term economic strategy.

<sup>98</sup> Halford, R, 1995 op.cit pp.ix-x, 237-39, 241.



recently prominent works. Canadian writers concentrated, naturally enough, on 'their' war: the long hard struggle against the elements and their entrapment between the Royal and US Navies. Conflicting strategies misused Canadian forces and denied autonomy or a section of the theatre equal to deployment.<sup>99</sup> Douglas's works on the Royal Canadian Air Force and Navy were almost unknown outside Canada<sup>100</sup> and US authors were until recently ignorant of the burgeoning literature.<sup>101</sup> Canada moved through the general, operational, personal, and technical writing Britain passed through 1960-69, after the Ultra-domination of the 1970's (though benefitting from its inclusion), and Anniversary memorial works, all at once.

American historiography has been dominated by Roosevelt's relationship with Churchill, early experiences of benign and then belligerent neutrality before December 1941, the Pacific war, and controversy between American and British historians.<sup>102</sup> Heavy shipping losses, technological impotence, and controversy over performance lessened the desire for publicity and commemoration. US Navy history has been served by solid personal, technical and incidental accounts of offensive forces in the later years of the Battle, not 'classical' discussions of the Battle, as well as Morison's official history, "which succeeds as *literature*, not just narrative and analysis", as Keegan put it.<sup>103</sup> Poor shipping management and contrastingly amazing construction programmes have never lacked prominence. As in Britain, the official histories of the US War Shipping Administration, Maritime Commission, and Army Transport Service described operations, not experiences. As in Canada, the US Merchant 'Marine' was regarded as a wartime expedient.<sup>104</sup> This was in stark contrast to its prewar size, second only to the British Merchant Navy. Company histories are few and recent, compared to technical and construction histories. Oral and social histories are now available. All lack an overarching scheme, as more general British

<sup>99</sup> Fully 50% of Atlantic escort responsibility eventually lay in Royal Canadian Navy hands: Milner in Runyan & Copes 1994 op.cit.p.121.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid p.128.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, footnote 18 to p.128.

<sup>102</sup> Competition between theatres, control of Army aircraft versus US Navy, the actions and opinions of Admiral King.

<sup>103</sup> Keegan 1995 op.cit, p.39.

<sup>104</sup> It could be built for wartime use and disposed of, without any commitment to employment, seapower, or economics.

works provided. None of the long tradition of merchant and marine writing in the US (Melville, Dana, *et al*) transfers to Second World War works.<sup>105</sup> In Britain, heritage fed company histories and, much later, personal accounts, which are the only repository of wartime Merchant Navy experiences and operations.

German historiography is separate once again, due partly to the language barrier, and partly to the different experience of the war and Cold War. A small amount of this material was translated and read in English, the dominant language of the memory of the Battle. Only some ideas and attitudes passed translators and editors; many were never communicated to the world. Atlantic Battle icons are lacking in other nations: only Germany turned the U-Boat into one. Elsewhere the aircraft carrier replaced the battleship, and then the ballistic-missile submarine replaced the aircraft carrier, but in morbid terms.<sup>106</sup> German books translated for the English world have a strange quality. Those about the U-boat show no trace of any pleasure in sinking merchant shipping, or much sorrow in relating the losses and deaths caused by Allied escorts and aircraft. There is no 'death or glory, worth the sacrifice in the end' found in Allied books, nor any real hatred of opponents who bombed German cities and killed civilians. The absence of feeling is not designed to divert anger about stories of killing and sinking Allies. It is an unwillingness to express such feelings. It is a grief, more than a guilt, that is too deep to be borne openly. The winners can permanently parade theirs for the world and press, especially in those last six anniversary years.<sup>107</sup>

Hadley fortunately first identified in 1995 for English readers a historiography for the wartime and postwar eras. He also introduced German naval history from its mid-nineteenth century beginnings, and the relationship and tension between surface and submarine forces and writings which characterise German experience and memory. A century and a half of naval experience and thought are now open to us, as is a large,

<sup>105</sup> US maritime writing was closer to nature writing; Raban, 1992 op.cit p.20.

<sup>106</sup> Postwar, nuclear power made such national icons ambiguous and menacing, not mere glorious symbols.

overlooked and unexplored field of German writing: a century of the U-Boat's centrality in German naval thought and conceptualisation. Only in Germany does the Battle, via the U-Boat, have a prominent position. As Hadley points out,

"the prevailing European mindset of continentalism has led scholars to identify 'war' with 'land-war' and 'war-novel' with 'land-war novel'. Naval war and its attendant questions of morality and maritime prestige have been excluded from the formula. Yet army and U-Boat works present essentially different arguments about Germany's experience of war."<sup>108</sup>

Strong public support for naval matters starkly contrast with the complaints of German authors that Government and public misunderstood seapower, and misused the navy. He does not cover naval histories to any great degree, focussing on popular accounts, novels, documentary, and cinema as representations. Nor does he compare and contrast German with British or other writings.<sup>109</sup> All popular accounts are examined, but not the technical histories of Rössler or the solid scholarly works of Rohwer. The latter exemplify the academic work on the Battle. Hadley makes the important point that quality is not something that can be found: aesthetic achievements are few and there is little to criticise, as in other textual research. There is the "same repetition of exhaustive descriptive metaphor found in British maritime novels."<sup>110</sup> He sees each representation merely as a piece of the puzzle, allowing us to view German culture and perceptions.

German historiography moved from publicist works, to populist and propagandist accounts during the Great War, as well as incidental works and biographies. These were supplemented by feature films. The Second World War brought another burst of propagandist books and films, idolising the aces and ordinary men of the U-Boat force into heroes. Postwar, these were modified into accounts which mourned, described and celebrated the men and their sacrifice. A separate strand of anti-U-Boat works emerged in the

<sup>107</sup> Hadley 1995 op.cit p.138, 178-9.

<sup>108</sup> Naval narrative can be more romantic, about the 'clean sea', devoid of the scars and debris of combat. Seabattles create no carnage or shrines, sailors can be untouched by politics, and so forth. Yet even there, land-war terms were used: operational U-Boat were called *Frontboote*, "Front-Boats", as if on a maritime Western Front. Ibid, p.x.

<sup>109</sup> Hybrid works, such as Gasaway's German-source inspired *Grey Wolf Grey Sea*, [Arthur Barker, London, 1972] would benefit especially from Hadley's attention, as they are equally outside the usual textual and thematic run of Atlantic works, and from German genres.

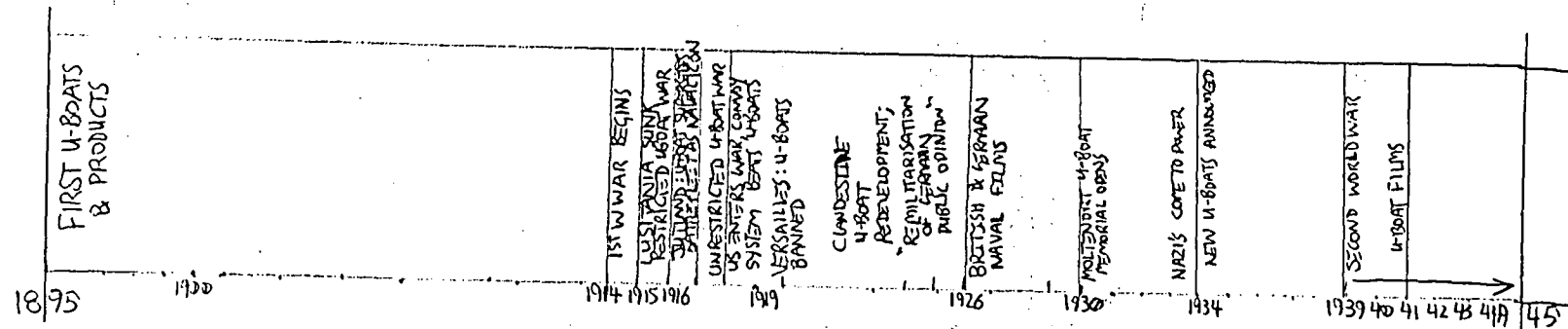
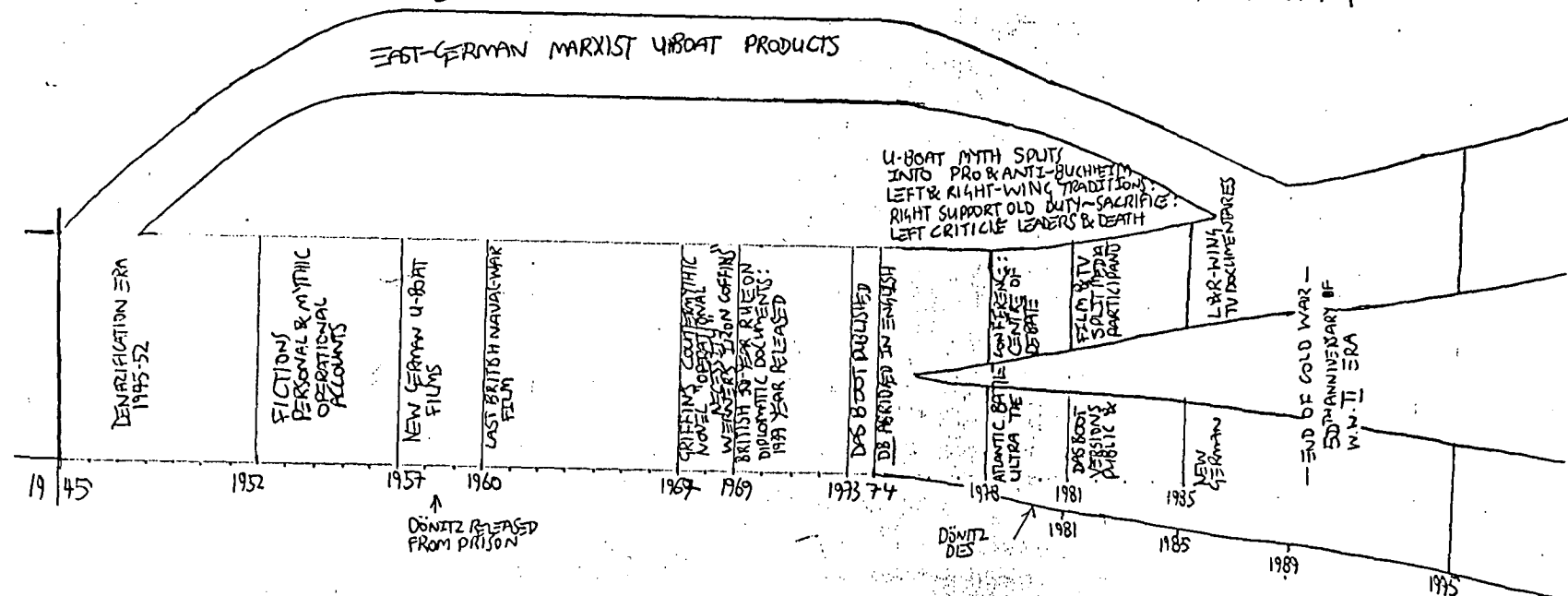


PLATE 1.8

HADLEY 1895-1995: U-BOAT HISTORY & MYTH



socialist East Germany. Technical accounts followed, as well as novels and features, before the revolution of Buchheim's fictional retelling of his wartime experiences. This controversial book and later film dominated German representation after 1973. A debate between supporters and detractors of Buchheim has defined and fuelled much portrayal of U-Boats since.

There are similarities between British and American authors: they concentrated on the same types of battles, defeats, victories, incidents, and views. Differences are, however, marked. Mines, bombing and the threat of invasion made ordinary life in Britain a front line experience in ideas and expectations, if not sober reality. The Dunkirk, Blitz, and 'Sealion' myths the British told the US and themselves made them all feel combatants in a way never experienced in America. This crucial difference between American and British perceptions has dominated writing about the Battle. Canada's separate experience has been excluded, caught with the worst opinions and attitudes, between Britain's tactical domination and vital needs, and American strategic domination and logistical preferences.<sup>111</sup> American writing condemns Britain for trying to run the Battle, while neglecting other areas for its peripheral rather than central strategy. Recent scholars have at last identified this crucial difference in warmaking. American scholars generally refuse British policies any credence, though they may demonstrate why they were used. Many US scholars and popularisers alike have condemned Britain for thinking the Battle vital at all, forgetting that survival depended on the Atlantic. American and British accounts are, from different perspectives, hard on Admiral King.<sup>112</sup> There is as much against King as there is for him.

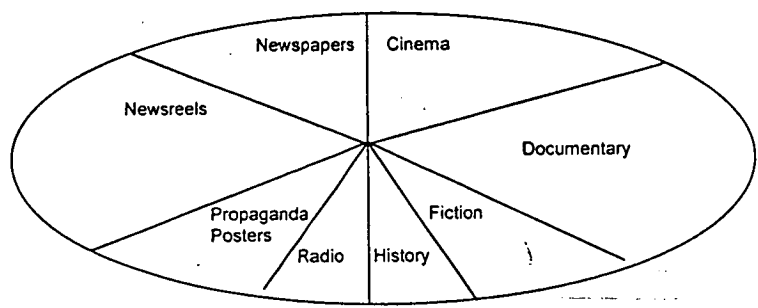
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<sup>110</sup> Raban 1992 op.cit, cited in Hadley 1995 op.cit p.xi.

<sup>111</sup> Canada's sense of frontline experience caused by coastal U-Boat operations was long forgotten, see Hadley's 1985 *U-Boats Against Canada* [ McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal].

<sup>112</sup> Adm.King was made head of the US Atlantic fleet during 1940. Supposedly an Anglophobe, he resisted misuse of the US Navy by government or other services, and also considered unescorted convoy worse than none at all, his only real error when U-Boats began operating off the US coast after Pearl Harbor. The Pacific war, delay in providing escorts and a convoy system, has led to a myth that he 'allowed' vast numbers of ships to be sunk in order to retain control over his forces and avoid interservice cooperation. He didn't remove US Navy ships en masse from the Atlantic once war was declared, refuse to institute convoy, or approve of offensive operations already shown by the Royal Navy to be useless. He did escort US troop convoys instead of Allied trade convoys, and did think no convoy better than convoy unescorted, which was a fatal mistake - with other people's shipping and lives. Blair, vol I, op.cit, pp.457-460, 521-33, 594.

Plate 1.9: SECOND WORLD WAR MEDIA



Representations are divided into different types and subtypes. Written histories and personal accounts, fiction, cinema features, and documentary [once cinematic, now totally televised or on videocassette] are the chief forms, and the Internet has been a recently added growing area of activity.

Plate 1.10: POSTWAR MEDIA

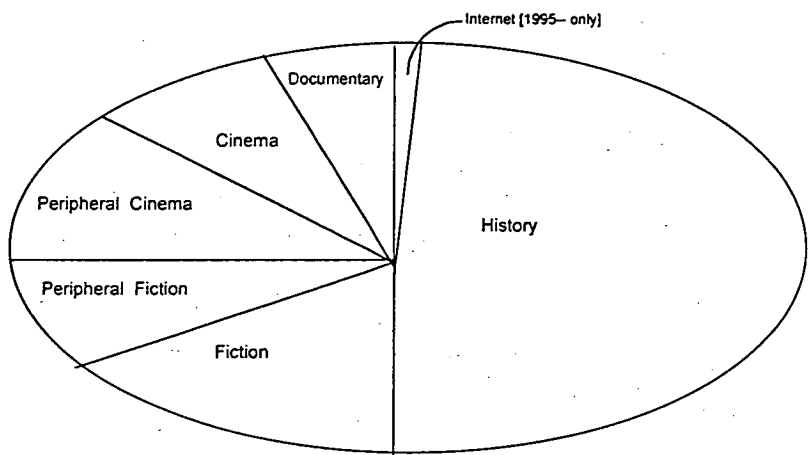
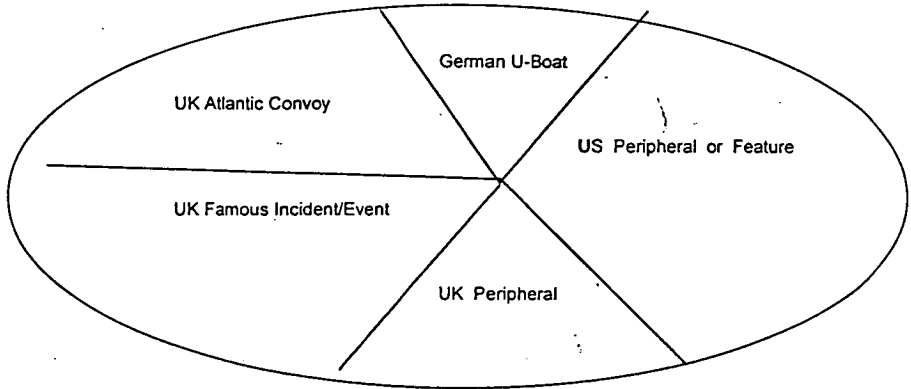


Plate .11: CINEMA, \* 1940-98



Unlike history, cinema has been generally commercial, devoted to expounding rather than exploring mythology, and neglectful of the mundane and the personal in favour of the famous and exciting. Plate 1.11 denotes the various types. Only The Cruel Sea dealt directly with convoy escort and defence, though it has non- and counter-mythical elements. Another three featured U-Boat operations from the German side, heavily mythical.<sup>113</sup> Only two other than these have even had U-Boats in them: one was a peripheral 'classic', The Enemy Below, which never dealt with attacking or defending shipping, the *raison d'être* of the U-Boat campaign; while the other was an even more peripheral tale, set, deliberately at war's end.<sup>114</sup> The other half-dozen Atlantic films, all British, recreated mythically famous peripheral surface and intelligence actions, not typical, unremarkable submarine-convoy warfare.

Fictions of the Battle are easily summed. Up to 1990 there were according to Michael Paris more than 2000 novels of or about the Second World War in English or translation, at least 86 directly involving the Battle.<sup>115</sup> Plate 1.12 defines their variations. There have been many novels since 1990 just with naval settings. There is no clear definition in any case, as many have substantial content elsewhere. The few classic, novels of the war at sea in the Immediate Postwar Era led (in the boom of cheap novels) to a growing number of titles and sustained interest in the following eras, added to by the growth of the 'reminiscence' market leading up to and during the fiftieth Anniversary. They are mythical: they concentrate on action and drama described either vividly or coldly. They are divided in two. There were six works by professional writers with a powerful character and relationship-driven story about the ocean and the Battle, which penetrated popular awareness.<sup>116</sup> These were amid a hundred commercial or 'pulp' populist novels of varying quality, coverage and connection. These have become more popular over the years, as representations of the Battle in most media

<sup>113</sup> Sharks & Little Fish, 1957; U-47: Kaleu Prien, 1958; Das Boot, 1981.

<sup>114</sup> Murphy's War, 1971.

<sup>115</sup> 39-45: 9, 45-60: 22, 60-74: 18, 74-89: 34, 89-98: 7+=90; Paris, M, The Novels of World War Two: An Annotated Bibliography, Library Association, London, 1990, p.vii.

<sup>116</sup> The Cruel Sea and HMS Ulysses were instant commercial successes, always remembered; the latter still in print.

Plate 1.12: FICTION

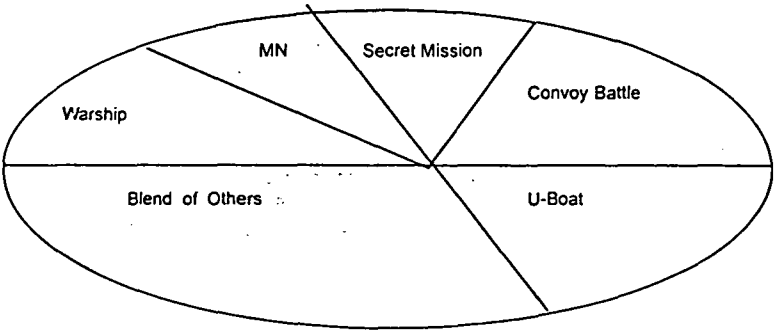
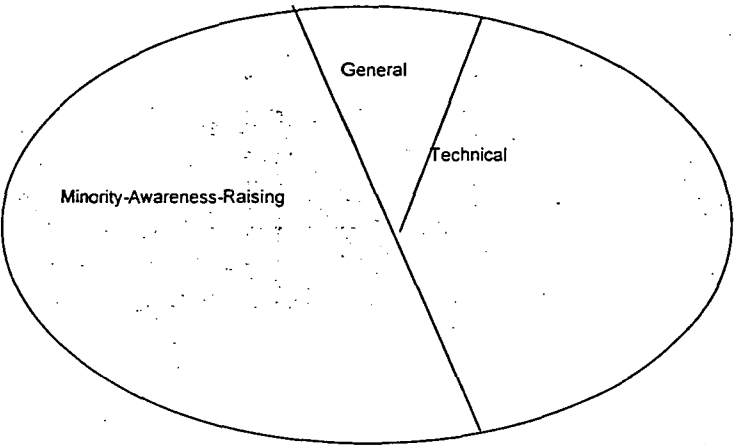


Plate 1.13: DOCUMENTARY





has grown. Fiction has changed little thematically and technically since 1955. Since 1989 numbers have shrunk, but there are no changes in quality or focus from the commercial concerns of marketing and serial production. The forced continuation of central character and theme into new settings is perhaps the most distinct recent feature. The Battle has become a subgenre of war fiction, as ephemeral and formulaic as any other commercial genre.<sup>117</sup>

Novels supported Battle myths in two ways. Like cinema, they supported the myth of combat and action, without demonstrating mass, mundane, convoying and escort experience. Otherwise they supported any or all Battle myths, depending on who was writing. Coastal Command crew or base novels reflected Coastal Command myths and experiences: long hours, worry, fear, high losses to U-Boats and German aircraft, weather, rowdy nights of drinking, as well as the boredom of patrol amidst the supposed glamour of flight. Merchant Navy novels had a stereotypical mix of old salts and young boys, an alcoholic or two, often the captain; a mate everyone hates, a pink-cheeked young radio-operator, an Royal Navy DEMS or MRA man or crew, a Scots engineer. The food will be poor, hours long, living spaces cramped, worry continuous. Many of the crew will have been repeatedly sunk and rescued only to return to sea. Royal Navy novels had a high, distant captain, a mix of Hostilities-Only officers, old salt regulars and Hostilities-Only ratings, and too few escorts; U-Boats always penetrate the screen, but will still be sunk.

Postwar documentaries about the Battle were infrequent and not illustrative of genre, era, or the Battle in 'reality' or representation. There has effectively been only one per era save in the Anniversary period. Nor do they illustrate the Battle against other naval campaigns or the war generally. There have been only two dozen or so documentaries about the war at sea in total since 1950, and only twelve with close relation to the Battle. They are unfortunately clustered in recent years, as cinema features were in the

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<sup>117</sup> No Battle book since Das Boot has remained long in print or on sale, or been reprinted, unlike 1950s titles which are periodically reprinted with new covers. Battle books remain available through flourishing second-hand shops and through lending libraries, read almost entirely by fans. Their post-Great War equivalents decayed decades ago, explaining their absence, save library and occasional mint condition expensive titles in quality antiquarian bookshops.

1950s, by accident of production and audience taste. One principal difference is that even if 1950s sea movies did not become classics, as many war movies did, they were all successful irrespective of quality. In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s documentaries have been, with one exception neither popular, nor successful in changing the myth, even when well made.<sup>118</sup> Only in Germany after 1985 was there a thin but steady run of documentary concentrating on the U-Boat as continuing literary memory and consciousness icon. This was as trapped in obsessive support for and condemnations of Buchheim as other media in Germany since 1973.

Because wartime and postwar films were often 'docudramatic', 'made for television', pure documentary illuminated little that features did not.<sup>119</sup> Attention was elsewhere, save in rare circumstances.<sup>120</sup> There were no equivalent 'peace docos' in the 1950s to 'war docos' during the war.<sup>121</sup> There has been slow change of focus over the half-century, increasingly narrowing to either people or technology, in how events are covered and how people are presented. Plate 1.13 shows the divisions between them. Focus has moved from generalised presentation of large events to (as usual with the modern awareness-raising documentary) the under-or-unrepresented, suffering, ordinary person. All show either the restrictions of serials and bias, or simply to maker's intentions, as is usual with documentary and TV, irrespective of actual issues.<sup>122</sup>

In summary, mythology enfolds all aspects of the Battle and its representation. This mythology has causes, features, and content. A chronology has been derived, with a taxonomy of cross-cultural media. These show what changes have occurred, in addition to suggesting reasons for lack of evolution. National historiographies and their differences and similarities can be explored, beyond the bare bones of separate eras,

<sup>118</sup> The exception is the excellent 1973 Thames-TV series The World At War.

<sup>119</sup> Being monochrome, and having aspect ratios close to TV.

<sup>120</sup> Broad cataloguing of campaigns, or much later minority pieces on technology, seamen's plight, or Black US Navy service.

<sup>121</sup> Penelope Huston, Sight & Sound, Summer 1955, cited in Ramsden, J, "Refocussing 'The People's War': British War films of the 1950's" in Journal of Contemporary History, Vol33Nº.1, pp35-63, Sage Publications, London, 1998, p.53.

idiosyncrasies, and types of representation. The Battle's events and experiences are both unproblematical in scope and well established. What is difficult is integrating the Battle's different genres, while exploring rigid national perspectives and stereotypes, and the very pervasive myths and legends which dominate it. It has only a few well-established points of contention, little forceful dispute, and little apparent complexity to attract the academic. Despite participant interest and representation, it has suffered from relative neglect, from marginalisation in memory and media activity, as well as official commemoration. Its overwhelming continuity of theme, content and genre is its most prominent and peculiar feature. The origin and features of those continuities and changes are the subject of the next five chapters.

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<sup>122</sup> This could be avoided by describing what contemporaries thought, and comparing that to recent historical theory and perspective, instead of what the makers wish to use the Battle for. Documentary makers necessarily always have their own agenda.

## REPRESENTATIONS AND MYTH 1914-45

I'm sure we may rate the past tremendous year as the most splendid, as it was the most deadly year,  
 in our long English and British, story. Nothing Surpasses 1940.  
 But I and my faithful colleagues had no lack of care, the shadow of the U-Boat blockade cast its chill still on us.  
 All our plans depended upon the defeat of this menace. The Battle of France was lost.  
 The Battle of Britain was won. The Battle of the Atlantic has now to be fought.

Churchill, July 1941.

Continuity characterised the themes and content of representations after 1945. What has been less obvious is continuity from before the war, originating in historical and mythological responses to the Great War at sea. There are continuities of official employment of history and myth. There have been continuities of myths among seamen, blending existing myth and legend with new ideas. There was also continuity of representation. Official propaganda, personal perspective, and commercial interest were the purposes.<sup>1</sup> Forms created then run through all later works, up to the present, though there have been variations and departures. Such variations have been derided or ignored, but rarely explored. Change has been gradual but accumulative. It has not however always been obvious. The force of the experiences drove the representations. Continuities and resemblances in cultural attitudes and works today, towards a conflict that began sixty years ago, and using ideas and themes created for and after a conflict that began in 1914, warrant further exploration.

The authors - mainly ex-participants - wrote mythically because they were immersed in it. Seamen of all nations grew up with both tales and history, within a mythic and psychological framework of great past deeds. British maritime myth before the Elizabethans was not of English making. The Phoenicians, Themistocles, St. Brendan, Diaz, Magellan, Columbus, Vespucci, Caboto, were their heroes of old, as for the Spanish and Portuguese, Dutch and Italians. Domestic heroes were added to foreign once they were created: Anson, Cook and Franklin, Morse, Brunel, Plimsoll, as British maritime supremacy became unassailable in the nineteenth century. For the Englishman the sea was "swollen with significance...it shaped and defined the nation...was where its wars were fought...its roads to market...the testing ground of manhood. The Englishman could hardly look off a pier without thinking of" English naval myth begun with the Elizabethans: "Drake, Hawkins, Raleigh, Blake, Jervis

and Nelson" to Jellicoe and Beatty.<sup>2</sup> The American ocean "was freed of the weight of history in Britain" though it too had heroes such as Jones, Perry, Farragut, Dewey.<sup>3</sup> The French had Colbert, the Dutch Tromp, deRuyter and Piet Hein. This was the world of history, legends, heroes and antecedents the writers of Atlantic Battle myth grew up in and contributed to.

The Battle comprised two rounds, 1914-18 and 1939-45. The former began a revolution in naval strategy, tactics, logistics, technology, and representation. The latter secured it. Civilians at sea became targets, combatants, intermingled with servicemen. For the first time the ocean was a vital, single link in the survival of Britain and its dependencies. It divided Britain from its colonies and greatest potential ally, the USA. Germany could not ignore these vulnerable sea routes, despite its continental strategy. In both World Wars Britain's long-developed markets and sources overseas, and its colonies, aided and abetted in a vastly different conflict to its experience. Previously, Britain had been largely self-sufficient. By 1914 a century of world peace, and the benefits and restrictions of leading the industrial revolution had taken their toll. The great nineteenth century expansion in population and industrialisation meant dependence on markets and suppliers overseas. Most of its food, industrial materials, fuel and other supplies were imported.<sup>4</sup> It could no longer stand alone without a vigorous defence and support of the Atlantic routes it depended upon. Britain's continental war effort and its economy were threatened by weapons its Navy could not combat.<sup>5</sup> The fact that most Atlantic Campaign writers allude to Great War convoys, but only a few regard and examine it as the first of two equal rounds, is instructive.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Each tended to dominate a media: propaganda drove history, personal ideas drove memoirs, and commercial need drove cinema, though in wartime as never after propaganda was the dominant purpose of all media.

<sup>2</sup> Raban 1992, op.cit p.20.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.23.

<sup>4</sup> Despite the Battle, Britain imported 14.57 million tons of US steel 1940-45; Calder 1991 op.cit p.57.

<sup>5</sup> Preston, A, *The First Submarines*, Phoebus Publishing, London, 1974, p180.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Winton 1983 & 1990, Terraine 1989, Tarrant 1990.

## PLATE 2.1: CHRONOLOGY OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC, 1914-18

The Great War's Battle (largely outside the Atlantic) between shipping and commerce raiders (both ships & submarines) is less documented and its phases less defined than that of the Second World War.

**Phase 1: 28/8/14--18/2/15**

Early phase of unrestricted U-Boat warfare on warships, and many notable sinkings.  
Slow early phase of restricted U-Boat warfare on shipping, with gradually rising losses & growth of mythology of shocking effectiveness and cruelty.

**Phase 2: 18/2/15-- 5/15**

Unrestricted submarine warfare on merchant shipping begins. Liner *Lusitania* sunk 7/5/15, with heavy loss of life, including neutral Americans. Political and public-relations disaster; German Naval Command calls off unrestricted U-Boat warfare on shipping.

**Phase 3: 5/15--2/16**

Shipping losses fall. Surface raiders continue operating, while U-Boat are hamstrung by regulations.

**Phase 4: 2/16--1/17**

Despite restrictions on U-Boats, shipping losses begin to climb, slowly, in all theatres - Baltic, Mediterranean, North Sea, Atlantic.  
Surface raiders are all sunk, blockaded, interned or immobilised in foreign ports.  
German High Seas Fleet effectively trapped in harbour after Jutland [May 1916].

**Phase 5: 1/17 -- 4/17**

Re-application of unrestricted warfare on shipping under new U-Boat Arm leader Admiral von Holtzendorff. Shipping losses rise exponentially.

**Phase 6: 4/17--11/11/18**

Extension of convoying to Scandinavia, & thence to Atlantic sees dramatic drop in shipping losses, while sinkings of U-Boats remain low. US enters war; USN begins patrols and support of Allied navies. Accelerated U-Boat construction meant more at sea, with more building & working-up, when Armistice signed.  
Convoy theory vindicated.

Germany built 344 fighting submarines [Front-Boote] 1914-18: with 28 at war's commencement, with 226 under construction & 212 more ordered at the Armistice; more than 800 in total.  
199 were lost (53.5%), with 515 Officers & 4,849 men, and 1400 captured, of a total of 13,000 seagoing personnel (40%).

The value of convoy, apart from construction, weaponry, sensors, or tactics, can be seen from a few simple figures:

11,135,000 tons of merchant shipping were lost to U-Boats, out of 13,000,000 tons lost in total, a high proportion of the remainder lost to mines, many laid by U-Boats.

Great Britain alone lost more than 2,000 ships with 15,313 men (5.5% of the Merchant Service), while the RN lost 22,811, or 4%; [6,000 - 26% - at Jutland alone].

More than 84,000 voyages were made in convoy 1917-18, 0.4% sunk (257 ships), while 2,216 ships were sunk steaming independently in the same period.  
Only 18 were sunk under joint Air & Sea escort (Macintyre 1961 op.cit p.22.).

For the first time new technologies were used widely by major powers at war, not experimentally, but as conventional weapons. The submarine, the mine, the radio and the aircraft all literally brought new dimensions to war. All could have been even more revolutionary had not naval leaderships been so conservative.<sup>7</sup> Mistrust of or unwillingness to use the power of submarines, torpedoes, mines, and aircraft also meant that naval powers were unprepared politically, technically and theoretically to exploit them. Their effectiveness occurred in spite of naval leadership. The impact of shipping losses and of the relative impotence of anti-submarine weapons changed sea warfare.<sup>8</sup> The shock of new technologies was most keenly felt amongst seamen and those government and naval authorities charged with shipping direction and use. Surface raiders began taking a toll of Allied merchant ships within days of the beginning of the war, while Germany's few U-Boats concentrated, with alarming success, on warships: sinking several while both Admirals and the public recoiled from this ungentlemanlike new weapon. U-Boats had the advantage of being able to submerge when enemy warships appeared, but they were dogged by low submerged speed and manoeuvrability until late in the Second World War.<sup>9</sup>

Popular disgust and diplomatic pressures prevented unrestricted U-Boat warfare until 1916, despite incidents such as the sinking of *Lusitania*. Even then, worries about drawing America into the war, and growing international opposition to Germany caused two separate cessations of unrestricted warfare before the situation on the Western Front demanded it.<sup>10</sup> Shipping losses rose, without convoy or weaponry to protect vessels. Great War U-Boats almost won their campaign.<sup>11</sup> The Second World 'tonnage-war' would be fought by men led and trained by Great War U-Boat men.<sup>12</sup> The actual event of torpedoing was traumatic enough, compared to the stopping and sinking of ships by surface warships in previous centuries. Taking of prisoners by commerce-raider was normal, but was a radically new experience in any case,

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<sup>7</sup> Beesly, P, Very Special Intelligence: the Admiralty's O.I.C. in WW2, Hamilton, London, 1982, p.3-6.

<sup>8</sup> Hadley, M, op.cit, p.22; Ireland, B, Warships, Hamlyn, London, 1978, p.103-4.

<sup>9</sup> Preston, A, 1974, op.cit, p.165-6.

<sup>10</sup> See Plate 2.1 "Chronology of the Battle of the Atlantic: 1914-18" of this thesis.

<sup>11</sup> In April 1917 25% of Allied merchantmen in British waters were sunk; Bennett *et al*, Sea Warfare, Ure-Smith, Sydney, 1975, p.69.

<sup>12</sup> Winning the war by sinking more shipping than your enemy could build, as well as their cargoes; Hadley 1995 op.cit p.68.

given the decades of peace preceding the Great War. U-Boats were described like pirates. They attacked unsuspecting unarmed civilians, and they left crews to fend for themselves, or killed survivors as towing survivors to land or waiting for neutral shipping to appear was usually impractical and dangerous.

This would set the tone for representations of submarine warfare on shipping.<sup>13</sup> It would also create much of the mythology.<sup>14</sup> What also changed were the basic ideas and images navies, governments, and the public would have of the sea and those who work on it. Maritime mythology has always existed to make sense of the sea, placing humans and their experiences in understandable frameworks. During and after the Great War the former mythology of the sea, of wind, wave, seamonsters and pirates, largely dispelled by education and improvements in ship design and technology, were replaced and enhanced with new myths: of piratical, brutal submariners, greedy owners, ignorant and uncaring military figures and a wasteful public. Seamen, civilians in a near-total war, continued to be a sidelined misunderstood, near-subversive element of society, for all their centrality to the war effort.<sup>15</sup>

At war's end there was continuity and change. The U-Boats were surrendered and disposed of. Germany was forbidden to replace them. Merchant fleets decayed.<sup>16</sup> The Depression and slow recovery further undermined their position. Terms and titles designed to give seamen and service some status, position and acknowledgment for their sacrifice were peacetime creations. In 1928, the Prince of Wales was made 'Master of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets' in addition to other titles, but it was hardly used before 1939.<sup>17</sup> Both commerce-warfare and anti-submarine warfare were

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix I, "Cultural Chronology, 1915-2000", of this thesis.

<sup>14</sup> Hadley 1995 op.cit, p.164.

<sup>15</sup> White, J, "Hardly Heroes: Canadian Merchant Seamen & the International Convoy System 1939-45", *The Northern Mariner*, Vol 5, N.4, October 1995, pp.19, 21, 24, 27, 28.

<sup>16</sup> British merchant tonnage was 19<sup>3</sup> tons in 1914 (39% of world tonnage), 16<sup>6</sup>t (32.5%) by 1918: 11<sup>6</sup> tons lost, 7<sup>4</sup> tons replaced; 17<sup>35</sup>t (32.5% of world tonnage) in 1939; Adams "Control of British Merchant Shipping" in Howarth & Law op.cit p.166. "The British Merchant Navy was slightly bigger 1914 than 1939, but in a much better position by 1945", Winton 1983 op.cit pp.113-5.

<sup>17</sup> Woodman, (1994) revealingly states "what press and propaganda were pleased to call the Merchant Navy. No such thing existed: it was a courtesy given a huge collection of ships owned by a variety of companies whose standards represented the spectrum of corporate responsibility." pp.15-6. *The Arctic Convoys, 1941-45*, Murray, London, 1994.



in limbo. Pacifism and arms-limitation treaties were fashionable. "Disenchantment with the war bred distrust of all things military."<sup>18</sup> Conventional surface warships were built at the expense of auxiliary aircraft carriers, escort vessels, and sensors. This was only partial delusion: Germany once freed of Versailles prepared a balanced fleet for ocean surface commerce raiding. U-Boats were given the low priority Britain gave to anti-submarine warfare. The lessons of 1914-18 about convoy, escort, weapons, and air cover were available, but were largely ignored. Bomber Command would be equally unprepared for the war ahead, but it, unlike the Merchant Navy, was not responsible for feeding the nation. It was unthinkable that a U-Boat campaign would be fought again. War itself was now largely unthinkable. Even though the seeds of the next were already planted, such measures as air cover and international agreements, combined with ASDIC, convoying, mass-production and tactics, were enough support for such a view.<sup>19</sup>

Wartime exploits generated postwar representations. During the Great War, newspapers and newsreels spoke of brave seamen, U-Boat pirates, faithful escorts like sheepdogs around the edges of herds of merchantmen. Postwar books such as von Spiegel's U-Boat-202, 1919, Hashagen's Log of a U-Boat Commander, 1931, and Bone's Merchantmen-At-Arms, 1929, contained much that would be perpetuated, both in tone and focus.<sup>20</sup> It was steam that caused the separation between Royal and Merchant navies, as well as growing state regulation of trade.<sup>21</sup> Significantly, Bone admitted he removed "much language and description from the 1919 edition."<sup>22</sup> What remained was hyperbolic, and mythic, enough. International law was shattered by mine and torpedo. "Merchant vessels assassinated, murder commonplace".<sup>23</sup> The alarming height of sinkings, a "burden heavy, losses great", the fatalism of sailors, embarrassed by attention, were reiterated.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Terraine 1980 op.cit p.205.

<sup>19</sup> Preston, A, Submarines Since 1919, Phoebus, London, 1974, p.215.

<sup>20</sup> For details of U-Boat mythology and iconography 1895-1995, see Hadley's superb counter-mythical Count Not the Dead: the Popular Image of the German Submarine, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis Maryland, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> Bone, D, Merchantmen-At-Arms: The Merchant Service in the War, Chatto & Windus, London, 1929, pp.8-10, p.30.

<sup>22</sup> Author's note.

<sup>23</sup> Bone op.cit p.64; p.24.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid pp.30, 50, 64, 82-3, 100.

Tranquil, idyllic voyages were "not typical."<sup>25</sup> Armed freighters fought U-Boats, sank one, damaged another. "Abused and ridiculed as prisoners", "victims of German savagery" were repatriated, ragged, hungry and destitute. Given no consideration by the Board of Trade, seamen were without maintenance or manning planning until November 1915. Everything else was left to Seamen's Missions.<sup>26</sup> Deep water horrors were emphasised. "Dissatisfied with frightfulness that murdered only half a ship's crew, boats are shelled", hospital ships torpedoed.<sup>27</sup> Air attack was one of the "constant perils of the sea."<sup>28</sup> U-Boats were underestimated, countermeasures useless, before zigzag, war standard ship construction, convoy, and conferences, were introduced.<sup>29</sup> Seamen, gallant fishermen and minesweeper crews, steady dock workers, solid salvagemen and repairmen were all undeterred. "Obstinate courage and unconquerable sea pride forbade escorts to desert their merchantmen."<sup>30</sup> The balance of Bones' book described voyages, attacks, sinkings, and lifeboat experiences which were to be repeated almost indefinitely in Merchant Navy and Navy accounts. The mundane was only used to demonstrate the intrusion of violence. The force of these experiences drove men to write only of the memorable moments, not a balanced account. Their passion and pain were the model for the accounts of later wars.

Some interwar books described seamen's war experiences, though never without errors of fact or lurid exposition. Servicemen's experiences in escorts and aircraft do not seem to have received equal publicity. Representation of escort experience outside staid official accounts do not appear to be available. Both seamen and servicemen became almost forgotten, especially as the Depression loomed and landspeople worried more about themselves. New media like cinema newsreels and features, as well as books, magazines, and newspapers, also contributed to such myths, especially of German U-Boat men. In Germany these were an honoured and respected elite, untouched by mutiny and betrayal.<sup>31</sup> Though anti-war notions

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid p.xx.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid p.130; p.83.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid p.100; p.103, p.118.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid p.107.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid p.166; p.140-46.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid op.cit p.204; p.223.

<sup>31</sup> Hadley 1995 op.cit p.44-5.

took hold of the public for the first time, books, novels and cinema did create slightly broader awareness of sea warfare. It now comprised more than the regular forces so popular in Mahanian theory.<sup>32</sup>

Wartime experience was blended with official propaganda in post-war cinema. British Instructional Films made no less than six films about Great War battles in the 1920's. These features had a strong documentary flavour which was reiterated in Second World War films. Jutland [1921], Zebrugge [1924], and The Battles of Coronel and the Falklands [1927] had a naval subject, though only Zebrugge was concerned even slightly with the U-Boat threat. They were general overviews: campaign history, without personal stories or narrative, like later TV documentaries. They combined newsreel with selected re-enactments, models, maps and dioramas.<sup>33</sup> Jutland described the famous seabattle which did not decide the war, but did, accidentally, castrate the German navy. Coronel and Falklands was a potent tale of disaster redeemed by triumph, like the war at sea itself, and like classic British histories.<sup>34</sup> As with Second World War and later films, War Office and Admiralty involvement was large. In Coronel and Falklands no less than 35 warships and 4,000 ratings took part. The level of involvement was so great that questions were asked in Parliament: was this expenditure morally or legally justifiable? Was the Admiralty getting its money's worth?<sup>35</sup> As Hynes points out, such co-operation was primarily for monument-making.<sup>36</sup> Making a profit was secondary. Like wartime and post-war films they were commercially successful but critically tepid. British critic Ms. Bryher commented

"in Coronel and Falklands war is presented entirely from romantic boy-adventure book angle...those who *desire* [my italics] unreality are forced further and further from the actual meaning of battle."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Mahan in the 1890s had polarised naval history and doctrine by demonstrating the centrality of large fleets in crucial battles, while also emphasising the use of war on trade to a lesser extent. Navies and governments absorbed his first principle but not his second, and five decades of misconception and misuse of his theories ensued. Rodger, 1996 op.cit, p.xvii-xix.

<sup>33</sup> Hynes, S, A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture, Atheneum, NY, 1991, p.443.

<sup>34</sup> The destruction of old British ships by a successful German cruiser squadron, followed by outraged dispatch of battlecruisers in their only real role: the Wagnerian hunting and destruction of the German ships, in December 1914.

<sup>35</sup> Hynes op.cit, p.444.

<sup>36</sup> Loc.cit.

This was prophetic. It is equally applicable to the cinema representations which would resemble these features, three decades later. The last British battlefleet movie, Sink the Bismarck! of 1960, was lambasted for returning almost exactly to the same ancient style.<sup>38</sup>

In German literature, 1916's action off Jutland was the key shift from surface to submarine focus. As U-Boat successes continued with the fleet penned in harbour, the U-Boat could dominate, in strategy and representation.<sup>39</sup> After the Great War the U-Boat's image in Germany was undamaged by the surface fleet's mutiny and revolts. 1926 saw U-9, Sinking of UC-48, U-Boat in Danger, as well as the surface-fleet films The Scuttled Fleet and Battle of Jutland.<sup>40</sup> This represented "a remilitarisation of public opinion."<sup>41</sup> The Moltenort U-Boat memorial begun in 1927 opened in 1930, with Nazi rededication and enlargement in 1936.<sup>42</sup> It is the only German memorial common to both wars.<sup>43</sup> Interwar German books had a jolly tone. Numerous U-Boat captains, including ones read in translation in English such as Freiherr von Spiegel's U-Boat-202 (1919) and Hashagen's 1931 Log of A U-Boat Commander, saw things simply. War was a game. The relative immunity from attack and loss that U-Boats enjoyed was apparent. The cruel Allied blockade of Germany's trade caused much suffering, and the war was a just one, though the enemy's humanity was never forgotten.

There was "a glut" of such books by 1934, on the eve of the official rebirth of the U-Boat, according to F-O Busch, who, introducing his own first work tried to separate the good from the mere hacks.<sup>44</sup> Submariners were heroes who broke the Allied starvation blockade and almost won the war at sea, not reviled murderous pirates, which is the usual notion outside Germany. The participants had powerful memories, and this power was transmitted to

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<sup>37</sup> Cited in Hynes op.cit, p.445.

<sup>38</sup> Ramsden op.cit p.41.

<sup>39</sup> Hadley, 1995 op.cit, p.37.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.55.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.56.

<sup>42</sup> Nazi additions were an 85' brick Viking-ship prow and emblem; Second World War losses were added in 1969. See Appendix III for their appearance.

<sup>43</sup> Hadley 1995 op.cit p.75.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.68.

readers effectively, as the large number of later accounts Hadley describes attest.

Only Martin Niemoller was counter-mythical. A former U-Boat commander, he alone stood aside from glorification and mythologisation. This earned him his comrade's odium. He was eventually imprisoned by the Nazis, including four years in Dachau for church involvement and passionate opposition to Hitler. Post-war he opposed fascism, militarism and nationalism until his death in 1984. Niemoller was a distinct iconoclast. Later writers such as Werner and Buchheim evolved from propagandists to dissidents as much through the desire for profit and fame as conscience. Buchheim was re-mythical. He made new myths instead of opposing and discarding old ones. U-Boat man as victim preceded Buchheim, even if the theme of betrayal of naïve youth, 'just obeying the orders' of political leaders, only gathered force in Germany after 1945.<sup>45</sup> Only Nazism put this moral aspect to their lives: submariners of other nations never underwent such examination, save Japanese indicted of killing men in lifeboats.<sup>46</sup>

Aside from the contention between repetition and innovation in portrayals, there was continuity between First and Second World War tactics and strategy. Mass-construction of shipping and warships, the wholesale dedication of economy and population to war, and eventual tactics and training, all originated after 1914. Germany's total tonnage-war on shipping was a Great War strategy. Convoy, an ancient strategy derided until 1917, was delayed. After scientific analysis of its effects and effectiveness, it counteracted early shipping losses and the impotence of escort forces both numerically and tactically. Only technology: radio and direction-finding, radar, ASDIC (known afterwards as SONAR), and their interleaving communications practices were Second World War responses.<sup>47</sup> Planning, the application of science to effectiveness of procedures and weapons testing in the Second World War, was the other difference between the two Battles.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.70-71.

<sup>46</sup> Four incidents as against one known German, and at least one known British.

<sup>47</sup> Even cryptology was a Great War practice. The British read German naval codes from 1915 onwards. See Beesly's Very Special Intelligence: the Admiralty's O.I.C. in WW2, and Room 40, both Hamilton, London, 1982, and Secrets of War: "Ultra.", Prod/Dir Alan Gordon, The Documedia Group/Pearson TV, 1998.

The Germans used new technologies, but didn't interlock scientists, manufacturers and sailors together, and nor did they rigidly analyse performance. Because they began with strategic and tactical advantages (if not numerical ones) there was no need to examine why things worked. Allied Operational Research was able to combine existing procedures and technologies with primitive analysis of new tactics in order to improve methods of finding and attacking U-Boats. The rest was numbers: enough shipping effectively used and managed. It was also the planning, construction and deployment of escorts, sufficiently trained crews to man and fight them, enough aircraft to patrol transit areas, and sensors to find U-Boats either from land or from small carriers organically integrated with escorts. Enough sufficiently lethal weapons to drive off damage or sink U-Boats were also required, as were enough research, experimentation and marshalling of resources. Dedication and fortitude among civilian seamen to keep working, despite poor pay, hours, and conditions, amidst the battle fought only around and because of them, were vital. This was principally why the Allies won.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Till, G, "The Battle of the Atlantic As History" in Howarth & Law op.cit pp.585-95 & pp.587-89; Zimmerman "Technology & Tactics", in Howarth & Law op.cit, pp.476-99.

## PLATE 2.2: CHRONOLOGY OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC, 1939-45

The Second World War's Atlantic Battle has been divided into 8 phases, based on growth in intensity, geographical variations & U-Boat & escort deployment:

**Phase 1: 3/9/39--31/5/40**

**Aug.** U-boats commence intensive training; commerce-raiders sail to war positions.

**Sep.** War declared, liner *Athenia* torpedoed contrary to head-of-U-boat-arm Commodore Dönitz's orders. Shipping losses to U-Boats, mines & aircraft climb steadily. Convoy routes slowly extended; drastic escort shortfall.

**Dec.** Battle of the River Plate, commerce raider *Graf Spee* sunk.

**1940**

**Mar.** *Relative* lull in Atlantic as U-Boats are withdrawn with surface fleet in support of Norwegian invasion. US increasingly bends Neutrality Laws to supply UK (Lend-Lease) & escort Western Atlantic convoys.

**Phase 2: 1/6/40--31/3/41**

**Jun.** France falls, U-Boats' use Atlantic bases, cutting distance to convoy routes; corvette escorts first used, convoy losses rise dramatically - the First "Happy Time" begins.

Commerce raiders strike in central and south Atlantic areas.

**Oct.** Convoys SC-7 & HX-79 slaughtered in surfaced U-Boat night attacks, perhaps worst single convoy losses ever. This is the exception recalled as the norm in many later accounts.

**1941**

**Feb.** RN Western Approaches Command set up in Liverpool UK solely to counter U-Boat & aircraft threat.

**Mar.** Key U-Boat Aces lost, though first use of Admiral Dönitz's *Wolfpack* tactic offsets this.

First "Happy Time" ends.

**Phase 3: 1/4/41--31/12/41**

**May.** *Bismarck* voyage disrupts Atlantic convoy routing, though commerce-raider threat is afterwards all but eliminated due to *Ultra*-directed hunting of supply ships. Growing numbers and experience of escorts swinging Battle in Allied favour.

**Sep.** Arctic convoys begin, growing in size & losses as Germans attempt to stem supplies to USSR.

**Nov.** Escort-carrier HMS *Audacity* first used, by Cdr. Walker, RN, in support of Convoy HG-76.

**Dec.** US enters the war; escorts support US military; no convoys on US coast mean heavy losses (Second "Happy Time") begins there - U-Boat war now all-Atlantic affair, with coast-to-coast convoy escort, though U-Boat concentration on US coast relieves pressure elsewhere.

**Phase 4: 1/1/42--31/7/42**

Germans first oppose Arctic Convoys. Atlantic losses continue to climb - 4million tons (1,000 ships) in first 6 months. Blackout, convoys, escort etc introduced on US coast, so U-Boats move to Caribbean (Jun), where there are none. Shipping losses continue. Explosive growth of US warship, cargo ship & aircraft production begins. Escort & aircraft numbers, with improved sonar, radar, High-Frequency Direction-Finding, & better weaponry, tactics, & experience grow, as do U-Boat numbers.

Second "Happy Time" ends, but shipping losses do not decline significantly: diversified, not concentrated in one area.

**Jul.** Arctic convoy PQ-17 disastrously scattered due to Admiralty mistakes; 75% of ships lost.

**Phase 5: 1/8/42--31/5/43**

**Nov.** Operation *Torch* concentrates escorts away from Atlantic, & losses rise in "Black Gaps" without air cover.

**1943**

**Jan.** After failed warship attack on Arctic convoy JW-51B, Dönitz becomes head of German Navy. Casablanca & Washington Conferences finally commit all available resources to winning Atlantic campaign, as serious losses there are stalling Allied advance in other theatres. Additional escorts, Escort carriers, & Very-Long-Range aircraft deployed to fight convoys through. Initial shipping losses, however, heavy.

**Feb.** Terrible weather foils both U-Boats & escorts, though convoys ON-166, ON-167 badly mauled.

**Mar.** Slaughter of convoys peaks - SC-121 mauled; SC-122 & HX-229 merge due to heavy losses.

**Apr.** Terrible weather; U-Boats withdraw to prepare for final offensive to cut Atlantic routes.

**May.** Escorts, Escort-carriers & VLR a/c sink 41 U-Boats, shipping losses drop sharply, in key battles round convoys HX-233, ONS-5. SC-130 last Atlantic convoy to be seriously threatened by U-Boats. Dönitz admits privately on 24May "We have lost the Battle of the Atlantic." U-Boats withdrawn to rearm for less risky areas. "Black Gaps" finally closed. Adm.King sets up 10<sup>TH</sup> Fleet to centralise USN Atlantic Battle & ASW operations, like WAC.

**Phase 6: 1/6/43--31/8/43**

**Jun.** RAF "Biscay Offensive" sees Dönitz order U-Boat groups to transit Bay surfaced to fight off aircraft, & many lost.

**Jul.** USN CVE-centred escort groups & aircraft push aside new U-Boat offensive in central Atlantic.

**Phase 7: 1/9/43--31/5/44**

**Aug-Sep.** N.Atlantic offensive by U-Boats with acoustic torpedoes, *snorkel* & radar-warning systems fails to regain initiative; U-Boat losses remain high, shipping losses remain low. U-Boat attack escorts, but are foiled by simple anti-GNAT (Ger.Nav.Acc.Torp) countermeasures. Radical Type XXI, XXIII hydrodynamic *Electro-Boats* rushed through design to production.

**Oct.** U-Boat offensive in Central Atlantic equally foiled.

**Dec.** Battlecruiser *Scharnhorst* sunk attacking Arctic Convoy JW-55B; only *Tirpitz* remains to threaten the Kola Run.

**1944**

Med.Sea all but closed to U-Boats, despite use of better sensors, *snorkel*, Radar-Absorbent Materials, & decoys. U-Boat offensives continue, but without any change: U-Boat losses remain higher than shipping losses every month. Escort & Support-groups, Escort carriers & VLR ASW a/c hold the initiative; there are too many ships to sink. Increased bombing of Germany disrupts U-Boat production, including radical new types; Soviet advance in East drains manpower & resources away.

**Phase 8: 1/6/44--6/5/45**

**Jun-Jul.** U-Boat offensive on D-Day channel convoys fails, low shipping losses inshore do not halt Allied advance.

**Sep.** Allies isolate French Atlantic bases, U-Boats begin withdrawal to Norway, meaning dangerous longer voyages to sealanes. European & Canadian inshore U-Boat offensives bother but do not endanger Allied supply lines.

**Nov.** *Tirpitz* sunk by RAF, removing last surface threat to Arctic Convoys; prompting reduction and transfer of RN battleships.

**1945**

**Jan.** Radical hydrodynamic fast quiet Type XXI, XXIII U-Boats scare but do not pose real threat to Allied supply lines. With RAM, *snorkel*, GNAT, & decoys, they are true submarines, but too few too late.

**May.** VE Day; many U-Boats scuttled to avoid capture; many hundreds more awaiting crews & fuel discovered by advancing Allies:- dangerous future offensives foiled by manpower & fuel situation.

There was no patriotic fanfare when war began: it could be justified but not glorified.<sup>49</sup> Britain and Germany's Battle commenced on the 3<sup>RD</sup> of September 1939, when *U-30* torpedoed the liner *SS Athenia* and the 'pocket-battleship' *Graf Spee* was already hunting in the South Atlantic. Almost to the very last day, 8<sup>TH</sup>May 1945, almost-permanently submerged U-boats tracked ships with passive SONAR and attacked escorts with acoustic torpedoes.<sup>50</sup> Navies on both sides had to improvise, having prepared for different sorts of

<sup>49</sup> It was also relief: the suspense of the increasingly-impending doom of the 1930's had arrived.

Winter, J, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, p.8.

<sup>50</sup> Almost a 1980's Cold War scenario: see Clancy's *Red Storm Rising* (Collins, London, 1986), in Ch.5.



war. All had strategic, tactical, training, and technical difficulties. Weapons and sensors were as inadequate as rest and food at sea. Without detracting from the hard battle escorts fought, for long few, outranged and underequipped, they suffered less than the merchant ships they escorted, always slow, unarmoured, and unable to attack their tormentors. They were forced by tactics and circumstance to keep on moving in their vast oblongs, hammered by the dreaded Atlantic weather, picked off by faster opponents not even the escorts could always see. As losses thinned their ranks they rarely dared rescue survivors, for fear of disrupting the convoy, and being hit themselves. Myth described seamen living on Bully-beef and cocoa for weeks at sea, never long enough to develop scurvy, long enough to be harmful, with stress.<sup>51</sup> Some sailors and seamen ate very well ashore in America and Canada, as their widely-varying stories attest. Food and health were as wide-ranging as experiences and conditions, never typical.

Seamen received a sort of rank, a sort of uniform, status as almost-servicemen as losses grew and morale wavered. There was no 'buddy' system ingrained to make men perform. The US Merchant Marine expanded enormously and suffered due to its high proportion of raw landsmen.<sup>52</sup> Until late 1941, men's wages stopped the moment their ship was sunk. Seamen still had to replace their own personal gear after every sinking, though some compensation was available.<sup>53</sup> They were not initially conscripted or enlisted, ordered, or forced into service.<sup>54</sup> They went to sea because they were already seamen, that was their job as well as their duty. Generally they considered themselves sailors, separate from landspeople. They were subjected only to the war measures everyone had: rationing, the blackout, the inevitable shortages and risks of total war. Unlike other civilians, they had a very good idea of just why and how the shortages were occurring.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> In both fact and fiction, see the opening paragraphs of MacLean's *HMS Ulysses*, 1955.

<sup>52</sup> Valle, J, "US Merchant Marine Casualties in WWII" in Runyan & Copes 1994 op.cit, p.264.

<sup>53</sup> Hope, S, *Ocean Odyssey*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1944, p.62.

<sup>54</sup> They were a reserved occupation, like doctors, fishermen, nurses, miners, etc. After 1941 the Merchant Seamen's Pool guaranteed employment & compelled third choice of ship if first two were rejected; Lane 1990 op.cit p.31, 54.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p.9.

Wartime commands received their full due of publicity. Their temporary nature only affected postwar publicity of their efforts. Western Approaches Command was set up in February 1941 to explicitly control Royal Navy escort forces in the growing battle off the British coast. America was a nearly-belligerent but still benign neutral, all Europe lay at Hitler's feet. New and converted vessels for convoy escort and anti-submarine warfare needed effective employment in groups. Such wartime expedients, like emergency ship, escort, aircraft and electronics building, and the Prime Minister's own Battle of the Atlantic Committee, the result of emergency powers acts, did not need public approval, or publicity. Western Approaches Command lobbied the leadership directly, and ceased to exist at war's end. Composed largely of Naval and Volunteer Reserves, & Hostilities-Only personnel, these returned to Merchant Navy or civilian life after VE Day. Without a post-war successor to promote wartime exploits, as Fighter and Bomber Commands, the army, and even the regular, conventional Royal Navy had, Western Approaches Command's story was less prominent, as were the new, different, complicated stories of its convoy battles and anti-submarine warfare combats, its technology and experiences. In this area Western Approaches Command did no better than the Royal Canadian Navy, though it had the benefit of a few literary and cinematic classics and an unbroken series of personal, operational, incidental, technical and official accounts.<sup>56</sup>

RAF Coastal Command began the war with small numbers of old ineffective aircraft, almost no sensors or weaponry, and a mixed bag of tactics and ideas for patrol, search and rescue, as well as escort and anti-submarine warfare.<sup>57</sup> It grew slowly to its eventual war-winning combination of skill, experience, weapons, sensors and numbers. It ended the war like the escorts, with a hidden victory: a high proportion of U-Boats sunk, of men not killed, convoys not attacked, ships and supplies not lost. Coastal Command had little in the way of individual battles compared to Bomber Command's epic losses and very visible devastation of Germany, or Fighter Command's obvious

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<sup>56</sup> For Western Approaches Command operations & experiences, see most general Battle books, & works specific to Western Approaches Command; see particularly Whinney 1986 op.cit; Winton 1983 op.cit pp.172-320 *passim*; MacIntyre, D, The Battle of the Atlantic, Batsford, London, 1961, pp.68-178 *passim*; Costello & Hughes 1977 pp.107-322 *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> "300 fewer aircraft in 1939 than 1918", Costello & Hughes 1977, op.cit p.33.

defence of the UK and the stirring, chivalric idea of the single-combat pilot passed down from Great War exploits.<sup>58</sup> Coastal Command's battles and combats were at sea, unseen, and individual. Lone aircraft surprised and fought lone U-Boats. Each combat helped the struggle, but no one fight was conclusive.<sup>59</sup>

Canada's Battle experiences began within days of the British, and the last ship sunk, five hours before the ceasefire, was the Canadian-built British-manned *Avondale Park*.<sup>60</sup> Canada's navy had a darker, harder experience than Western Approaches Command, its enormous expansion and importance tainted by external perceptions of being dangerously incompetent, and internal of heading in the wrong direction, away from the long-desired balanced fleet.<sup>61</sup> One fifth of Coastal Command personnel were Canadian, in addition to six separate Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons in Coastal Command.<sup>62</sup> The Canadian Merchant navy was created largely from scratch as a wartime expedient. It was directed by the Canadian and British governments, disposed of after war's end, and continually struggled with problems of pay and conditions, public image, in addition to losses and deaths. Its seamen were outnumbered by industrial workers, servicemen, and even other seamen, even in Canada, and resultingly had a tough war.<sup>63</sup> Throughout the war Canada strained to contribute, while the media publicised and exaggerated both the enemy threat and the armed forces' actions.<sup>64</sup>

The US Navy began its own Battle later than the Royal Navy. It was neutral, gaining escort experience in quiet seas far from U-Boat concentrations, while expansion began. A few incidents such as the attack on USS *Greer* and the sinking of USS *Reuben James* were instrumental in slowly moving the navy and the nation toward war. The sudden shocks of the Atlantic

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<sup>58</sup> Relative losses in Merchant Navies, Navies, & Air Forces can be found in Plate 2.4 of this thesis.

<sup>59</sup> Every Coastal Command U-Boat sinking is laboriously related in Franks, N, *Search, Find & Kill*, Grub Street, London, 1995.

<sup>60</sup> The equivalent of the *Liberty* [but not identical, Canadian Merchant Navy historians hotly point out]; Harbron, J, *The Longest Battle: the RCN in the Atlantic 1939-45*, Vanwell Publications, St.Catherines, 1993, p.42.

<sup>61</sup> Another Mahanian idea, for the second-rate fleet: be balanced, for all eventualities.

<sup>62</sup> Bowyer, C, *Men of Coastal Command*, William Kimber, London, 1985, p.127.

<sup>63</sup> As recent works attest: White, Halley, Parker and Halford.

<sup>64</sup> See especially Hadley, M, "The Popular Image of the Canadian Navy", in Hadley et al 1996, op.cit and *U-Boats Against Canada: German Submarines in Canadian Waters*, McGill-Queens University Press, 1985.

war moving into US operational areas, U-Boat attacks, followed by Pearl Harbor, left a navy caught between conflicting needs, conflicting civilian and naval leaders, the pains of expansion and inexperience, and a strong sense that the Pacific was the 'real' war. These ideas would imprint themselves permanently on post-war writing as well. There would be a marked difference between European and US perspectives. American experience and representation was overall less personal and more official.<sup>65</sup>

Germany's Battle, as the aggressor, was separate. Its strategy was based upon attacking, not defending, vital maritime trade convoys. Germany was blockaded, its ships penned in harbour by low numbers and lack of fuel. Surface raiders had initial successes but depended on supply ships, which the larger, hard-pressed Allied navies could hunt using cryptology. U-Boats were a well trained and led minority hamstrung by poor torpedoes, initially underrated by the naval command. This fact was largely submerged by post-war historical concentration upon the U-Boat's threat and successes.<sup>66</sup> The Second World War repeated the Great War, with little surface action and growing, eventually unrestricted, U-Boat warfare. As before, accidents confounded attempts to keep to treaties and restrictions. No one expected Germany to, and the few accidental breaches became the internationally mythologised, reviled, norm.<sup>67</sup>

Germany's U-Boat war was limited by slow construction, manpower, and Allied countermeasures, even while successes were frequent. Advancing on all fronts, Germany lionised her new U-Boat aces in their periods of runaway success, though propaganda and misconception clouded analysis and interpretation from the beginning.<sup>68</sup> By the time Allied countermeasures became effective, Germany was committed to revolutionary types of U-Boat. Until these entered service the U-Waffe had to continue with its existing types,

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<sup>65</sup> Allard, D, "Introduction: An American Strategic Assessment" in Runyan & Copes 1994, op.cit, pp.xviii, xxi; Love, R, "The US Navy & Roll of Drums, 1942." Ibid, pp.97, 99, 102-3, 110-1, 114-5 & 119; Blair 1997 op.cit p.692.

<sup>66</sup> Mallmann Showell, J, [ed] The Führer Conferences on Naval Affairs 1939-45, Greenhill Books, London, 1990, introduction, p.vii-xi.

<sup>67</sup> Lemp's accidental sinking of SS *Athenia* only nine hours after the declaration of war did not help. An entire set of myths legends and misconceptions grew around German submarine brutality; see Lane 1990 op.cit.

obsolete though they became. Population and servicemen alike were continually reassured by Dönitz and propaganda the new types would come, and popular history, biography and newsreels went on reinforcing this. The war ended before many were ready, and there would not have been enough men or fuel for new offensives had it continued. The loss of the Atlantic campaign enabled the application of that overwhelming force Churchill had prophesied would be the decider once the USA joined Britain.<sup>69</sup>

In-depth research of convoy attacks (principally by Roskill, Rohwer, Tarrant, Terraine, and Blair) reveals not only how few there were compared to overall operations, but that the classic, well-remembered, convoy attacks were quite unusual. They were tactically and strategically significant due to high shipping losses or as striking examples of effective or ineffective anti-submarine warfare. "Happy is the convoy with no history."<sup>70</sup> Only those which were heavily attacked, and had significant losses, are 'historical' - well-known and written about - sometimes at great length or with great repetition. There are no hidden, shocking, untold stories of slaughtered convoys waiting to be treated. There are still dozens of individual untold accounts of sinkings, and thousands of stories of individual sailors. The limits of the men, their perspectives, contemporary means of reporting, and the limits of fiction and memoir all meant that the same types of story were told, in the same ways, almost inevitably. The genre and perspective of previous decades of writing about maritime life constrained style. There are few other attacked convoys not covered by at least one book, and apparently none entirely missed by historians. All the others involved small losses to a few U-Boats making brief attacks. Cumulatively they seem and were shocking, in terms of the actual material, personnel, and personal losses, but there were only a dozen or so 'classic' battles, and only a few dozen attacks, in convoy, when more than a few ships were lost. These are clustered after mid-1940, and before mid-1943. Thereafter U-Boats and escorts were more often lost than shipping.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> For German Battle & U-Boat experiences see especially Kaplan, P. & Currie, J. *Wolfpack*, Aurum, London, 1997 for a non-German semi-mythologised view; also Costello & Hughes *op.cit* pp.29-322 *passim*.

<sup>69</sup> Cited in Terraine, J. *Business In Great Waters: U-Boat Wars, 1916-45*, Putnam, NY, 1989, p.402.

<sup>70</sup> Milner, M. *North Atlantic Run*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis MD, 1985, p.269, "anonymous".

<sup>71</sup> Blair *op.cit* 1997 and 1999 relates every patrol, attack and sinking, which see, in laborious detail.

It is an exaggeration that seamen suffered *en masse* during the war. It is equally an distortion that few did: 25% were killed. The actual is between the mythic extremes. Only 10% of Atlantic convoys were sighted by the Germans, and only 3% attacked. Those attacked suffered, but thousands of seamen must have served unexposed to death or injury, even if it struck their convoys.<sup>72</sup> Admittedly much shipping was built and moved only after the Battle was won, when vast convoys moved unmolested across the expanse of the Atlantic. For seamen and sailors, in their time ashore, and in their tight communities, death and injury and loss must always have been present. Even their families were exposed to danger as never before. Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands, France, and Denmark were occupied while seamen were overseas for five years. Air raids on port and harbour facilities continued at a low rate throughout the war, unlike the Blitz on cities.<sup>73</sup> British seamen were often less at risk than their families, which directly goes against the grain of historiography. There was more risk at sea than home only for US, Caribbean, African, and Canadian seamen. Some Indian and Chinese families stood even greater risk of loss and death than those in occupied Europe or bombed Britain. Their stories are also yet to be told.<sup>74</sup> British Merchant Navy losses can be represented variously:

PLATE 2.3: BRITISH MERCHANT NAVY LOSSES, 1939-45

	Period	Ships	Crews	Casualties	Percentage
Sep-Dec	1939	53	1466	490	33.4%
Jan-Dec	1940	363	12206	5553	45.5%
Jan-Dec	1941	416	12756	6873	53.9%
Jan-Dec	1942	427	17927	7622	42.5%
Jan-Dec	1943	202	8418	3923	48.1%
Jan-Dec	1944	71	2380	1087	45.7%
Jan-May	1945	33	998	316	31.7%
Totals		1565	55882	25864	av.46.3%

Source: Slader, J, *Fourth Service*, 1994, p.312.

This plate excludes seamen in the Royal Navy<sup>75</sup>, and those killed after rescue or lost on passage in other vessels. Other Merchant Navies are also absent here, though their losses were commensurate. No really accurate cross-national figures have ever been completed. Each country did not

<sup>72</sup> Lane "The Human Economy of the Merchant Navy" in Howarth & Law op.cit, p.50-1.

<sup>73</sup> The author's father was born during an airraid on Glasgow from Norway in September 1943.

<sup>74</sup> Lane 1990 op.cit, Ch.7, "Sons of Empire", pp.155-88; *Forgotten Heroes*, BBC-TV, 1994.

<sup>75</sup> Signed-on under TX124X articles: in requisitioned trawlers, troopships, Landing Ships, Merchant Aircraft Carriers.

adequately account for its own losses. Several did not even clearly define them unless required to, usually by lobbying for access to pensions and compensation on behalf of seamen and their families.<sup>76</sup> Such figures show much aside from the changes in campaign intensity, and the hardening of attitudes in wartime.<sup>77</sup> These figures show, just for the British Merchant Navy, that even when shipping losses were comparatively low, as in 1939 and 1945, lives lost varied much less. Depending on variables such as where attacked<sup>78</sup>, the vessel's cargo, when it was sunk, as well as weather conditions, personnel losses in winter, in the North Atlantic, at night, in bad weather, could decimate crews even when only one or two ships were sunk. This had little effect on the war as a whole, but it takes apart the dry, tonnage-based strategic view and 'demythologising' stance of Smith and Blair: men killed and injured, meant sorrow and hardship, irrespective of circumstance.<sup>79</sup>

A quarter of white British seamen [24% or 35,000 of 144,000] were killed in the Second World War, the vast majority in the Battle, depending on definition of geographic and demographic boundary. 28,000 have no known grave. No armed service lost more than 10%, and 5% was normal, expected, and regarded as 'acceptable'. This was still a higher percentage than any of the armed services except commando units and bomber crews, who represented only the tip of RAF and USAAF personnel: one in 40-50.<sup>80</sup> Those 35,000 killed were not killed in the continuously intense campaign which representations portray. All seamen were aware of equal exposure to risk, even those never attacked or sunk, injured, or witnesses. Risk of death, and the strain of continual worry, for self and family, are the key to seamen's trauma. They are also the key to the representations. Participants saw enough men killed or wounded, enough destruction, to be radically changed by their experiences. Hardship, risk and death were the essence they later forcefully communicated to their readers.

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<sup>76</sup> Halford 1995 op.cit, pp.105, 241-2, 250, N.5 to p.253. This is also the Australian experience: Campbell 1996 op.cit.

<sup>77</sup> I.e. willingness of U-Boats to tow or direct boats to land; willingness of ships in convoy stopping to rescue survivors.

<sup>78</sup> I.e. equatorial Atlantic compared to the Arctic ocean.

<sup>79</sup> Lane in Howarth & Law loc.cit. Smith and Blair are not counter-mythical: they are re-mythical: promoting US myth.

<sup>80</sup> Bowyer, C, *Images of Air War*, Batsford, London, 1983, p.4.

Plate 2.4: RELATIVE LOSSES: 1939-45: ALLIED &amp; AXIS NAVIES &amp; AIR FORCES

	MN <sup>1</sup>	Ger.MN <sup>2</sup>	I.J.MN <sup>3</sup>	RN <sup>4</sup>	RAF CC <sup>5</sup>	Bmb C <sup>6</sup>	Ftr C <sup>7</sup>	LuftW <sup>8</sup>	U-Waffe <sup>9</sup>	USAAF <sup>10</sup>
KIA*	63,912 <sup>11</sup>	N.Avail	108,000 [79%] <sup>12</sup>	51,000	10,327 <sup>13</sup>	55,500 [125,000]	3960	44,065	30,003 [39,000]	80,000 <sup>14</sup> [64,000 B]
Wnd	<sup>15</sup>	N.Avail				8403	1215	28,200		
PoW		N.Avail				9838	601	27,610	5000	
Sh/A C	4786	N.Avail	2345	431 <sup>16</sup>	3,500	10,724			782	6,866
Tons	21,200 <sup>6t</sup>	1.22 <sup>6t</sup>	8,617 <sup>6t</sup>		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

## NOTES

\* About 35,000 of 144,000 British at sea [24%] in 3,557 ships; 12<sup>6</sup> tons in the North Atlantic, of 14<sup>6</sup> tons in the Atlantic.<sup>17</sup>

1. Averaged Allied Total: British, Canadian, French, Belgian, Netherlander, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, US, Australian, NZ, from all available sources. Losses were from total personnel of at least 530,000: 185,000 British, 25,000+ Norwegian, 290,000 US, 14,000 Australian, 12,000+Canadian, & other Occupied & Neutral Europeans. US MM losses were only 6,100, or 2% 1%, though largely in the Atlantic & Caribbean; vastly less than the average 24% sustained by MN's worldwide. Even 63,912 of 530,000 is still 12%, higher than any armed service, averaging 5-6%.

2. Hough, R, *The Longest Battle: the War at Sea*, Pan, London, 1987, p.274.

3. The Imperial Japanese Navy also lost 687 warships of 1.966<sup>6t</sup> 1941-45: Winton 1983, op.cit, p.320.

4. Ditto footnote 1.

5. Bowyer, C, *Images of Air War*, Batsford, London, 1983, p.70.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Buchheim, *U-Boat War*, Knopf, NY, 1977, np; individual estimates range from 28-32,000; Hadley op.cit p.174.

10. Bowyer, loc.cit.

11. Largely from Slader 1994 op.cit p.320. Slader's Australian numbers (109), however, were drastically inaccurate.

The Australian War Memorial hold the names of at least 647 Second World War Australian MN dead, not counting Australians signed-on as 'British' or 'British Empire/Commonwealth' & recorded/excluded elsewhere. Given this discrepancy (109>647), it is probable other national figures are equally in error, especially where recent efforts to identify dead seamen (spurred by requests for adequate recognition, remembrance, pensions and compensation) have not been carried out, or not exhaustively. Valle stated "No figures have yet been developed for the Danish, Dutch, & Belgian Merchant Navies, but it is probable they were even heavier than the British", in Runyan & Copes op.cit p.267.

Australian MN dead of both wars were at least 820 of about 14,000 who served in total (Campbell, I, 1996 p.19). More precise figures have not been calculated; the relevant source files being scattered between State and Federal archives, at the PRO in London, & MN Records held in Cardiff UK. From AWM & Australian Archives searched by the author for *All In The Same Boat: the Australian Merchant Navy in the World Wars 1914-18 & 1939-45*, the Australian War Memorial, Historical Research Section, Summer Scholar paper, February 1996.

12. 108,000 of 130,700, in Valle, J, "US Merchant Marine Casualties" in Runyan & Copes 1994 op.cit, p.267.

13. Including 1,651 groundcrew, Bowyer, op.cit, p.70.

14. 64,000 Bomber crewmen, ibid.

15. 4,200 serious wounds & 2,985 PoW British seamen; Slader 1988 op.cit p.16.

16. Major vessels; 84 in the Atlantic; Appendix S, Table III, Roskill 1963 Vol.III, Part 2, op.cit p.448.

17. Slader 1994, op.cit p.275 & 320.

[ ] indicate losses of relevant forces.

CC= RAF Coastal Command

Ftr C= RAF Fighter Command

IJ= Imperial Japanese

Bmb C= RAF Bomber Command

U-Waffe= U-Boat arm of the Kriegsmarine

Merchant vessels carried fewer men, and many more merchant than warships were lost: 3557; 14 million tons in the Atlantic, 12 on North Atlantic routes alone.<sup>81</sup> Had Merchant Navy personnel losses been more clearly stated, they might have received better postwar coverage. The scale of the sacrifice might have meant more publicity. The U-boat services' leading exponent of losses, remembrance and guilt, Buchheim, never hesitated to

<sup>81</sup> Merchant ships, due to design and cargo, also sank faster: 75% sank within 15 minutes; Slader, 1994, op.cit p.275.



point out that 28,000 of 39,000 (72%) were killed.<sup>82</sup> By comparison, 51,000 Royal Navy personnel were killed in the Second World War, but the vast majority were not killed in connection with the Battle, save the Kola Run, which killed more (2000+) Royal Navy than Merchant Navy personnel (829 - one third in PQ-17 alone).<sup>83</sup> Liverpool cathedral holds the names of 6081 Western Approaches Command dead, though servicemen from other commands - Home and Atlantic Fleets - must have died on convoy duty as well.<sup>84</sup> Most Royal Navy personnel died around Norway, in the Mediterranean, (both due to Axis air superiority) or in the Indian Ocean, where the Japanese advance took a heavy toll. Royal Navy losses were in serious single incidents, rather than slow steady attrition.<sup>85</sup>

Fussell tells us that men in combat have a limit, and that a maximum of 200-240 days fighting is as much as anyone, even the most resilient, can take.<sup>86</sup> Merchant Navy, Western Approaches Command and Coastal Command crews never went 200 days non-stop in combat, even in critically bad convoys. They were frequently exposed to danger for 12 or 14 hours, longer than bomber crews in action, and generally longer than individual infantrymen and tank personnel. Merchant Navy and Navy crews were under stress for weeks at a time: the perceived risk was ever-present. "Madness did not need the spectacle of bodies torn apart. Fear continued over long periods would do the job, as on the Kola Run, where 'Grown men went steadily insane before each other's eyes.'"<sup>87</sup> The sea's wartime risks always awaited them, not only its peacetime dangers of wind, storm, and ice. MacIntyre had four solid years in Western Approaches Command before the loss of his ship, with low crew losses, drove him ashore. Walker had two widely separated 'rests' in staff positions between time at sea, and his style and method of working and fighting at sea eventually killed him.<sup>88</sup> Even if men spent only a maximum of

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<sup>82</sup> Buchheim, *U-Boat War*, Knopf, NY, 1977, np.

<sup>83</sup> Roskill, S, *The War At Sea, 1939-45*, [3 vols in 4 parts], HMSO, London, 1961 op.cit, vol 3 part one, p.304.

<sup>84</sup> Cremer, P, *U-333, The Story of a U-boat Ace*, Ullstein Verlag, Berlin, 1982, p.213.

<sup>85</sup> *Courageous 519, Royal Oak 883, Barham 830, Hood 1400* [3 survivors], *Dasher 350+*, and so on.

<sup>86</sup> Fussell 1989 op.cit p.281.

<sup>87</sup> Jones, *Heart of Oak*, 1984, cited in Fussell 1989 op.cit p.293.

<sup>88</sup> Walker's style was intensely personal: he never delegated attacks to subordinates. This method meant long hours or days on open bridges, high stress, little sleep and poor nourishment. Such universal practices also caused ill-health in many who had shorter, harder post-war lives as a result. Robertson, T, *Walker, RN*, Evans Brothers, London, 1956, *passim*, but specifically p.199; Walker being the most prominent clinical example.

14-18 days at sea, they were often turned around very quickly, in both Western Approaches Command and the Merchant Seamen's Pool, irrespective of their mental state. Whether just off a typical, incident-free convoy, or a very bad one, there was no difference in terms of service. This was clearly something that never occurred to other services personnel: a damaged ship, or one which had lost much of its crew, needed repair, replacement, retraining.<sup>89</sup> Seamen, unlike sailors, were crew, not a 'ship's company': they came and left merchant ships individually at will, not by posting.<sup>90</sup>

Landspeople often treated seamen as noncombatants, 'army dodgers' avoiding dangerous war work by 'hiding' in the Merchant Navy. Men from ships sunk were sometimes turned away from clubs and hostels because they were not servicemen, or were improperly dressed, after having been torpedoed, mined, or bombed and adrift in the North Atlantic or Irish Sea for a week. They were insulted or harangued for "taking it easy", and told to "be real men and join up."<sup>91</sup> This was at a time when the Merchant Navy was suffering higher losses than any save the U-Boat men who actually opposed them.<sup>92</sup> Most accounts attempted to exclude the war from ordinary life: more so in the Merchant Navy than Western Approaches or Coastal Command.<sup>93</sup> Accounts of experiences were press creations or Ministry of Information propaganda, not from seamen or companies. Like Great War troops, seamen, sailors and airmen usually never saw the enemy, either. Opportunities to confront the enemy were few: attacks and sources of destruction were generally anonymous. Germans rarely saw seamen save through periscopes, or if surfacing to cruise among wreckage.<sup>94</sup>

U-Boat men took on the association with war and aggressive nationalism, and hence the darker aspects of Nazism, from their leader, Dönitz: supposed font of Great War U-Boat strategy, last Führer of Germany.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>89</sup> MacIntyre, D, *U-Boat Killer*, Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, 1956, introduction & p.174.

<sup>90</sup> While damaged merchant ships retained no crew during repairs, unlike their naval counterparts.

<sup>91</sup> *Forgotten Heroes*, 1994, op.cit; Lane 1990 op.cit p.53-4, 145, 211; Hay, op.cit, p.105.

<sup>92</sup> In addition to the Japanese Merchant Navy, which suffered 79% wartime fatal casualties. Valle, J, loc.cit.

<sup>93</sup> This was not, however, mundanity. Accounts emphasised peaceful voyages, civilian seamen in ships "on their lawful occasions", disrupted by attack, damage and destruction, not peaceful voyages uninterrupted by incident. Lane 1990 op.cit p.7-9.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Many tactics he claimed his own had been the Great-War tactical evolutions of other commanders.

German tactics and strategy were largely in his hands, left alone to fight his war till he took over the entire German Navy, without any change of strategic focus or direction. He considered technological advance would keep him ahead, little realising that American help had already allowed Britain to keep fighting till strategy (convoys and escort groups) and a few technologies (especially radar and cryptology) were fully deployed. American entrance and industrial might made the rest of the Battle a contest of losses versus construction: a contest Germany could not win, though it might inflict grievous losses in the process.<sup>96</sup> Many authors, including Roskill, pointed out that mid-late 1941 was the last time Dönitz's tonnage-war strategy *could* have won the Battle.<sup>97</sup>

Representation lagged behind events. Reporting of the Battle was immediate, with the loss of *Athenia* and the U-Boat odium that went with it. Terminology, propaganda and portrayal were still indistinct. The term Battle Of The Atlantic, inevitably Churchill's, dated from 19 March 1941, when it was first openly recognised that conditions in the Atlantic, for the whole war effort, were grave and growing worse.<sup>98</sup> A few vulnerable commerce raiders, and the growing reach of U-Boats (from captured French Atlantic bases) meant the campaign revolved largely around offshore escort and anti-submarine warfare, not more 'traditional' forms: blockade or protecting the battlefleet.<sup>99</sup> With the immediate danger of invasion over, and the Blitz not proving the terror to end all terrors prewar analysts expected, focus was given to this campaign to keep the people concentrating. Official need to inform combined with the powerful experiences of participants to produce a wide range of popular and personal accounts, incidental and operational histories. It kept up the spirit of defiant resistance which had got them through the Battle of Britain and beyond. Britain had no powerful Allies to speak of, having only Free French, Norwegian, Dutch, Polish and others in addition to the Dominions, and was nowhere on the offensive.<sup>100</sup> America had to be interested and involved.

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<sup>96</sup> Padfield, "Dönitz" in *Men Of War: Great Naval Leaders*, Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, 1992.

<sup>97</sup> Sinkings in convoy by pack were higher in 1943, but technology, training, weapons, cryptology, numbers especially of escorts aircraft and shipping, were very much on the Allied side. Only 574 of 2775 British vessels lost were in convoy. Even this averaged *forty ships per month*. Noble, in Creighton 1956 op.cit, p.11.

<sup>98</sup> Roskill 1954 op.cit, p.609.

<sup>99</sup> Trade protection was even more traditional than battlefleet protection: Winton 1990 op.cit, pp.13-16.

<sup>100</sup> Nowhere on the offensive save North Africa, and through strategic bombing.

Propaganda and official publicity kept the Battle in the public mind, even if it was not usually the first military priority. It was not until 1943, with both the USA and the USSR onside, that at Casablanca - and once there and never again - Churchill's staff pressed for the Battle to be made the first Allied priority in the West. Roosevelt agreed, and within six months the Battle was effectively won, with a key five-week period at the end, so convincingly that even Dönitz admitted it to his staff. The Atlantic route to Europe and the Second Front, was finally secure.<sup>101</sup>

The British offensives on the Western Front 1916-18 and in the Atlantic 1939-45 demonstrate how inadequate the term *Battle* is for describing and defining mass warfare, and how misleading it could be for cognoscenti and layperson alike. Use of the term attempted to fix in the public mind a new kind of fighting with a familiar but inadequate term.<sup>102</sup> These 'Battles' went on for months, with few distinguishing large-scale conflicts, akin to classic land campaigns of old, where manoeuvring and skirmishes led to set-piece battles.<sup>103</sup> Convoy warfare can only be described as campaigns, with attacks on trade better imagined as interceptions of individual ships, or of caravans of merchants. Growing public awareness since 1989 has been due to better overall education by general historians of the Second World War. The Battle has no battles, only a Battle, 1939-45, featureless to the outsider. Only conventional engagements had names: Plate, Denmark Strait, Barents, North Cape...even the famous sinking of *Bismarck* had no title. Convoy numbers had no ring; names like *Paukensschlag* could be smugly applied only by those in the know.

Despite constant media presentation of the war at sea during hostilities (both of overall losses and individual stories) public awareness of seamen still lagged behind that of the 'armed' services.<sup>104</sup> 'Realistic' reporting strengthened national resolve, making the population more determined to sustain losses in order to achieve war aims: but in Germany it emphasised conflict, exposing people to the war without showing what was actually

<sup>101</sup> General accounts of the Battle are now legion, this was derived from Costello & Hughes 1977, op.cit.

<sup>102</sup> Like Bomber Command's use of the terms 'Battle of Hamburg' and 'Berlin'.

<sup>103</sup> See Plate 2.2 "Chronology of the Battle of the Atlantic, 1939-45.", of this thesis.

<sup>104</sup> Lane 1990 op.cit pp.9, 63, Lane in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit pp.49, 54.

happening to actual Germans. British 'realism' emphasised the intrusion of war on the normalcy of peace (not the normalcy of conflict), the dangers of war, and accepting the sacrifices and limitations of the situation.<sup>105</sup>

It is normal in war for opposing sides to demonise 'the enemy', less so to demonise vulnerable sections of 'your' side. 'Lazy', 'overpaid' seamen were occasionally demonised by the crews who escorted them, more often by civilians ashore. U-Boat men were demonised by seamen and escort men alike; escorts and especially aircraft, by U-Boat men. Royal Navy escort forces demonised Canadians for their incompetence and poor discipline, (they were 'letting the side down') unaware of the expansion, training, and technical problems bedevilling their ally. Towards the end of the war, U-Boat men demonised their own leaders, save their commander, Admiral Dönitz. Only post-war would some U-Boat men come to regard him, not Hitler, as the one who sent them out to die.

Wartime representations concentrated on the Battle's early years. Authors reiterated the intrusion of war into peaceful lives, the forced dangers of seamen's lives, the imposition of naval discipline onto civilian seamen, and 'Hostilities Only' recruits in the Royal Navy & Royal Air Force alike. Shipping and personnel losses were reiterated continuously, rarely as actual percentages of voyages, convoys, personnel at sea. That only three percent of ships were attacked remained unknown.<sup>106</sup> Monsarrat's Corvette trilogy exemplified wartime attitudes and writing, if less fervent hype. "The whole world was composed of violence, fatigue and worry."<sup>107</sup> He separated the rare actions from the chronological flow of his rise from raw playwright-yachtsman to seasoned anti-submarine warfare captain. He kept, as Lane identified, the war at bay. "Now and again ships sank and survivors were rescued...it was hard to find any variety."<sup>108</sup> He "stuck to truth's bare outlines, sacrificing a spy plot and a love interest for more fashionable austerity."<sup>109</sup> Telling words: spies and lovers would dominate the sea and land in postwar works, beneath only relentless action.

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<sup>105</sup> Calvocoressi, P, Total War, Allen Lane, London, 1972, p.422.

<sup>106</sup> Participants, relatives, aficionados and some historians have all reacted negatively to the 'revisionism' of lowering the dangers and regarding the Battle as anything but a series of suicidal missions.

<sup>107</sup> Monsarrat, N, Three Corvettes, Cassell, London, 1946, p.5.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p.208.

Other 'Britishnesses' were displayed; "Inequality of weapons is how we always fight our wars." and "You can't recriminate against a national characteristic like lack of foresight."<sup>110</sup> Seamen were never forgotten, "theirs the ordeal and brave endurance", "no Briton was treated worse, or more brutally disregarded in the 1930s."<sup>111</sup>

Secrecy and the diversion of authorial effort to other areas necessarily conditioned the content and tone of history during hostilities. The wartime public could not be told how the Battle was being fought with new technologies<sup>112</sup>, so they had to be told something else, which contained but was more than 'the truth'.<sup>113</sup> In Britain drastic reductions in paper importation and wartime publishing meant that much representation was not serious literature.<sup>114</sup> Entertainment occupied much of the remainder not used for administration or propaganda. Lower quality and reduced standards were normal.<sup>115</sup> Popular general magazines and serials (now a vanished genre) for adults and children portrayed pictures and easily-digested subjects. Official reports and longer, government-approved narrative informative texts such as Hodson's British Merchantmen at War (1944, from the Ministry of Information), featured incidents and operations already famous in the news. Davis's Atlantic System, Johnston's Battle of the Seaways, and Woon's Atlantic Front: the Merchant Navy in the War, all 1941, were populist and informative, not academic.<sup>116</sup> They gave general accounts of the Battle so far, while Jesse's immediately filmed Saga of the San Demetrio, 1942, recounted a mythically inspirational incident.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p.78.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p.134.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p.42, 221.

<sup>112</sup> Such as Radar, HF/DF, Hedgehog & Squid, diverting convoys round U-Boats with Ultra.

<sup>113</sup> Calder 1991op.cit p.92.

<sup>114</sup> I.e representation of thought was commercial fiction and nonfiction, not deliberately artistic or avant-garde.

<sup>115</sup> Reduced standards of quality of paper and binding, printing, photographs, jackets, and the like. "During the war, the government instituted both *de facto* censorship and publication priorities, for political and security reasons, and due to the lack of supplies. All books had to be passed by a board...those deemed to have the highest merit were allotted paper first.", Grotta, D, Tolkien: Architect of Middle-Earth, 3rd Edn, Running Press, Philadelphia, 1991, footnote 16 to p.112, 186.

<sup>116</sup> While titles like 'Seaways' and 'Front' demonstrated unfamiliarity with maritime writing, and a desire to give the public ideas and themes understood from the Great War. Unrestricted U-Boat and A/S warfare had clearly not penetrated.

<sup>117</sup> Also reflecting the sense, dispelled by Pearl Harbor & *Paukensschlag*, that the Battle was turning in the Allies favour.

Lane devoted an entire chapter to Second World War Merchant Navy representations. The distinct, brave 'Britishness' of the seaman were emphasised.<sup>118</sup> "Genre conventions seem to require a set of morality tales which reiterate - and through reiteration honour - the heroic values of British and European culture."<sup>119</sup> The regular services paralleled these forms, with better funding, given comparatively primitive and unsophisticated publicity-management standards.<sup>120</sup> Publicising the Merchant Navy was only of value, with Transport Ministry backing, in wartime. This disappeared post-war, save as supplements to British government gazettes published 1947-50.<sup>121</sup>

Representations informed and supported the myth and perceptions government required. Blore's 1944 Turning Point, 1943 covered all the naval advances, not just the Battle, while Armstrong's Battle of the Oceans related more Merchant tales.<sup>122</sup> Tunstall's Ocean Power Wins summed up cross-service supremacy. Hope's 1944 Ocean Odyssey, from the Merchant Navy point of view, made an optimistic, interesting comparison to Dennis's mythic, grimmer The Rest Go On of 1942. Monsarrat's HM Corvette 1942, East Coast Corvette 1943, and 1945 Corvette Command, related mythic personal experiences: losses and the struggles of poor training, equipment and stress. Later, Ommanney's Flat-Top 1945, illustrated escort carriers on the Kola Run, less mythically, but with victory flushing the text. Edwards' Men of Action, 1943 described central British figures.<sup>123</sup>

In Germany representations reflected the U-Boat's dominance of naval iconography, despite the greater entertainment potential offered by recreated battles.<sup>124</sup> In addition to 'autobiographies' of U-Boat aces, inspirational operation accounts were a collaboration of Propaganda ministry and Dönitz's U-Waffe, one in which he participated. As well as brilliant photographs and

<sup>118</sup> They were poor, poorly-educated, unimaginative, free-spirited, fancy-free, hard-drinking, hard-living, irresponsible, but dependable for the dangerous, low-paid, uninspiring job they were called upon to do. Lane, 1990, op.cit pp.33-66.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid p.244.

<sup>120</sup> Fussell, P, Wartime, Oxford University Press, London, 1989, pp.153-4, 160-1, 286, 288.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, pp.33-66.

<sup>122</sup> The other naval advances included Allied supremacy in the Mediterranean, defeats of German surface forces in the Arctic, and the offensives against the Japanese in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Terms like 'Ocean Battle' also reveal how amorphous the terms and perceptions of commerce warfare were.

<sup>123</sup> Compare Howarth's 1992 Men Of War [Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London] : very little revision to who is now central.

<sup>124</sup> Hadley op.cit p.79.

propaganda from Buchheim, other authors promoted U-Boat warfare. After initial successes, the works were vital to sustaining national and U-Waffe morale, as the struggle never improved.<sup>125</sup> No Allied anti-submarine warfare aces were created like Germany's, though a few officers were prominent.<sup>126</sup>

Wartime cinema was as rigidly focussed on the war as other media, without in Allied countries being expressly controlled. Cinema benefitted from directors and producers being able to call on government and service support and assistance. In Germany naval cinema necessarily came under Nazi control and produced only approved materials: a single mythic feature, U-Boats Westwards, in 1941 and a historical narrative of the nineteenth century submarine developer Bauer, not about events in this war, the following year. Had German successes continued there would doubtless have been more stirring recreated combat features and narrative works extolling the model national characteristics of the U-Boats and their crews.<sup>127</sup>

Feature films and newsreels made during hostilities were either propaganda pieces or quietly effective, well-acted docudrama using real navies and seamen. The early comedy Neutral Port [1940] presented both British and foreign stereotypes. British seamen were stubborn, forthright, dedicated.<sup>128</sup> Convoy (1940), San Demetrio: London (1942), and Western Approaches (1944), as a contrast were all classics of the excellent British wartime docu-dramatic genre, and starkly more well made, if not always as exciting, as post-war efforts. Both Convoy and San Demetrio: London appeared to be written about convoy HX-84, attacked by a surface raider (hardly a usual occurrence), but Convoy eerily predated the event by months.<sup>129</sup> These contained several kinds of myth. One was the myth of prewar expectations: surface attack on a convoy. Another was the myth that surface warship combat would resemble Great War actions.<sup>130</sup> The myth of

<sup>125</sup> For a full discussion of wartime German popular accounts see Hadley 1995, op.cit 79-108.

<sup>126</sup> Walker, MacIntyre, Gretton, Broome, Campbell.

<sup>127</sup> For detailed exploration of German national characteristics exemplified by the U-Boat, see Hadley, op.cit, p.90-92.

<sup>128</sup> Will Ffyfe starred as a master who steals two interned German ships from a fictional Hispanic republic after his ship is sunk by a U-Boat. They in are sunk by U-Boats and British aircraft, without loss of life...

<sup>129</sup> Convoy opened in July, Scheer attacked HX-84 & escort HMS Jervis Bay 5/11/40; Winton 1990 op.cit p.160.

<sup>130</sup> As with the 'Mary Rose' and other Great War North Sea convoy incidents: Bennett *et al*, op.cit. pp.36-7 & 70.



the dominance of surface warship action would go on to be the post-war cinematic convention. Western Approaches, though having unlikely plot-elements (a U-Boat using a damaged freighter as bait) was about submarine attack, even if not the classic Battle story: mass U-Boat attacks on a convoy, seen from U-Boat, escort and Merchant Navy perspectives.

U-Boat warfare on escorted convoys violated audience expectations of naval warfare. These expectations were created by existing accounts of past centuries: the Armada and the Nelsonic era, by interwar films such as Jutland and The Battles of Coronel and Falklands, and by swashbuckling pirate movies such as those made by Fairbanks and Flynn.<sup>131</sup> This is partly why massed U-Boat attacks on convoys were not clearly absorbed and remembered. HX-84 became, like post-war recreated battles, a classic, but only in wartime. The attack on the convoy and its scattering were unique, which also enhanced their fame and force. This was not the typical experience, even if we are intended to think so by many novels and other concentrations on the short glorious lives of such ships.

Between 1939 and 1945 the Battle appeared in no less than seven British features, ironically more than the regular navy, Fighter and Bomber Command. They were blended with documentary, either in style and content, or less deliberately by being over-informative and illustrative rather than narrative: telling rather than showing. Awareness of gender was slightly better 1939-45 than before or after. There were thousands of voting women in factories and the forces. British wartime films were both more realistic and technically accomplished, and better guided by the vision of their makers, than post-war Atlantic works.<sup>132</sup> Partially this is due to the lack of conventional films about the regular navy and its operations compared to the Merchant Navy and

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<sup>131</sup> These were what audiences paid to see. Audiences sanctioned other forms and topics with low interest and sales. No post-war convoy warfare films were made, save Cruel Sea, though several were planned, including Poolman's 1959 Wolfpack. A novel tie-in was published of its screenplay. Paris 1990, op.cit, under "Titles: P." What these mainly show are the audience's opinions, tastes, ideas, expectations, not just the author's. They supported what they wanted and negatively sanctioned what they didn't want or like, as they do today. Non-commercial films are labelled 'arts', or ethnic', rather than being regarded as part of the mainstream.

<sup>132</sup> Both in terms of content and dramatic flow, and in terms of the sets, costumes, lighting, models, and cinematography.

Western Approaches Command.<sup>133</sup> RAF Coastal Command received from the Crown Film Unit its only cinematic attention, in a Target For Tonight-style drama resituated in the Atlantic.<sup>134</sup> Coastal Command ran 73 minutes and featured music by Vaughan-Williams, while Ealing's Find Fix and Strike concentrated on the less mundane offensive fighter and bomber operations of the Fleet Air Arm. As with Merchant Navy pieces, it had to inform as much as entertain the public, as it was made with or by Government, for propaganda, not commercial purposes.<sup>135</sup>

Only here were seamen and their experiences visible, in the short, docu-dramatic Merchant Seamen, fuller features such as Western Approaches, the American Long Voyage Home and Action in the North Atlantic. Hitchcock's Lifeboat was hardly about seamen per se - or the Battle.<sup>136</sup> Western Approaches was a colour semi-documentary of great effectiveness, using ships, location work and real sailors and seamen. The more narrative, less documentary San Demetrio: London, used models, tank work, and heavily-controlled, coached actors working closely with writers and actual seamen to capture the perspectives, mannerisms, and realities of real individuals. Both were thus very effective for their time, not least because in near-real situations not only their natural stiffness and awkwardness came out, but also their natural ease and consistency. Audiences long remembered them, and they are still available today.<sup>137</sup> Professionals were cyphers by comparison in Coward's 1942 In Which We Serve. All of the works were mythical: few would have made or watched a film where hardly anyone was sunk and no combat took place. Nor was any mention made of how many ships were getting through unscathed.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Further elaboration of wartime representation would merely repeat Hadley, and Suid, "the Battle of the Atlantic in Feature Films", in Runyan & Copes op.cit pp.311-21.

<sup>134</sup> Save the post-war peripheral feature The Sea Shall Not Have Them, about rescue launches, not anti-submarine warfare aircraft.

<sup>135</sup> Manvell, R, Films and the Second World War, Barnes & Co, New York, 1974, pp.70, 83, 85, 110-12.

<sup>136</sup> Lifeboat instead merely used the Battle to put contrasting characters in a closed environment: passenger & crew survivors from a ship with the captain of the U-Boat that sank it. Highly implausible, and indicative of the later misuse of the Battle as setting for drama, rather than exploring it via characters and events. The Cruel Sea exemplifies the latter, all later battle novels the former.

<sup>137</sup> As several mail and Internet-order sites attest: <http://members.aol.com/marbooks/videos.html>

<sup>138</sup> Manvell, op.cit, p.107-9.

The Battle also featured on the periphery. Past Dutch hero Piet Hein was the theme of a patriotic 1943 film about a shipyard owner who operated under the famous pseudonym to sabotage a U-Boat built for the Nazi occupier.<sup>139</sup> Other films produced other myths. The wish-fulfilment piece Shipbuilders was made the same year, where workers, unions, and management of a 1930s northern English shipyard came together to resolve their differences and overturn the decay and conflict strangling their industry.<sup>140</sup> This vital overall reform never occurred in British shipbuilding.<sup>141</sup> In addition to merchant navy and escort films, pictures like Neutral Port [1940], 49<sup>TH</sup> Parallel [1941], and Day Will Dawn [1942] focussed attention on the U-Boat to the total exclusion of battlefleets, as well as on propaganda for Canada, or seamen.<sup>142</sup> The public therefore always had the U-Boat in mind. Postwar features reversed this deficit, portraying only traditional actions or special operations, not anti-submarine warfare.

The Battle also received American attention, of a different kind. The Long Voyage Home<sup>143</sup> was an (unsurprisingly) "Stagey-looking dramatically interesting amalgam of four one-act plays by Eugene O'Neill with talent abounding", including real seamen playing themselves, where "Seamen on leave get drunk, philosophise and have adventures." Pauline Kael considered it "One of the finest of all movies that deal with life at sea."<sup>144</sup> It had a more honest ring than various fleeting depictions of seamen post-war, and was the equal of its British docu-dramatic propaganda contemporaries. America was uneasily neutral supporting the Royal Navy during the early years and thus its features focussed on preparations the US Navy and Army Air Force were making for the country's defence. Submarines, aircraft, and ships in training featured. No studio could present the vital escort work the US Navy carried out, save in newsreels which took care to avoid any mention of fighting. Once war arrived attention was focussed on the Pacific, but the Battle received big-screen

<sup>139</sup> The Silver Fleet, 1943. Manvell, op.cit, p.162.

<sup>140</sup> Halliwell's Film & Video Guide, [ed. John Walker], 12th edn, Harper-Collins, London, 1996, p.674.

<sup>141</sup> Burton, A, The Rise & Fall of British Shipbuilding, Constable, London, 1994.

<sup>142</sup> In the former a MN captain avenged the loss of his ship by sabotaging a U-Boat; while in the latter Norwegian fighters destroyed a U-Boat base before rescue by British Commandos. These were special operations, but U-Boat-centred. Halliwell's Film & Video Guide, [ed. John Walker], 12th edn, Harper-Collins, London, 1996, pp.188, 529.

<sup>143</sup> 1940, B&W, 1h40min; Wr: Dudley Nichols, Dir: John Ford, Pro: Walter Wanger. John Wayne. Halliwell's op.cit, p.449.

<sup>144</sup> Loc.cit.

treatment in Action In the North Atlantic, which starred Bogart in a trademark hard-bitten dedicated role, carrying on after his ship was sunk, and getting his next ship to Murmansk, on the Kola Run, after the captain was killed.<sup>145</sup>

Fussell remarkably regarded Hitchcock's peripheral Lifeboat, not Action in the North Atlantic, as the movie in which the 'Merchant Marine' got its credit. Only the European US Army had no wartime feature.<sup>146</sup> Fussell was disappointed on behalf of the US Army for not being remembered.<sup>147</sup> He went on to deride the desires of Merchant Marine veterans to be adequately recompensed and remembered, as if this is somehow unimportant, compared to the problems inherent in how we remember.<sup>148</sup> Later, Hawks produced Corvette K225 for Universal, where "a Canadian captain encounters submarines and bombers in Mid-Atlantic." This "good war film of its period" was, in another telling connection to post-war maritime cinema, "marred by romantic interest."<sup>149</sup> It is also telling that this feature by a US studio and director portrayed a Canadian, not an American captain. This was especially strange given growing US involvement by 1943. If not on the classic convoy routes, they had been escorting troop convoys to the UK and then North Africa since 1941, and off the US coast before full offensive operations by hunter-killer groups centred on escort-carriers. Despite plenty of US Navy action which could be portrayed, the Royal Canadian Navy was depicted because of inter-Allied political need, it being the best way of enhancing the Royal Canadian Navy's image after the battering it had taken in the winter of 1942-3.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Suid, in Runyan & Copes op.cit, pp.313-4. Amusingly it was banned post-war as the film's destination was Moscow in the USSR, with real communist Russians calling out "Tovarishchi!"

<sup>146</sup> After Marines, Army, Navy Guadalcanal Diary, Bataan, Air Force, Destination Tokyo: Fussell 1989, op.cit p.158.

<sup>147</sup> One hopes he likes Saving Private Ryan, though The Thin Red Line does nothing to alter the pro-Pacific bias.

<sup>148</sup> "Today the quest for credit is still going on", Fussell, loc cit.

<sup>149</sup> 1h37min, b&w; Halliwell's op.cit p.165; marred by romantic interest as Ramsden discussed op.cit p.57.

<sup>150</sup> The Royal Canadian Navy had been given escort of a large proportion of slow convoys [which resultingly spent longer in danger areas]. RCN escorts were less well-equipped than RN vessels, overworked, and their crews inexperienced and lacking training. These combined with the weather created situations where too few escorts were covering too many ships too often, without the sensors, weapons, training and cooperation to defend convoys or detect, attack and sink U-Boats. 80% of all ships lost in the winter of 1942-3 were in slow convoys under RCN escort, leading to the RN taking over these convoys before the May climax. Their ships fared no better, until drastic retraining was undertaken, along with more support vessels, very-long-range aircraft, and escort carriers, in the spring, when the tide was turned against the U-Boats. Milner, in Sadkovich op.cit p.53, note 42 on p.59; Milner in Runyan and Copes op.cit pp.130-35.

The Second World War produced a series of nationalistic propagandistic, and often accurate documentaries about the Battle and the men in it. The post-war era was as devoid of material publicising or presenting seamen's or sailor's lives as the prewar era. As Lane relates with insight and force, at some length, the wartime Ministry of Information took pains to ensure seamen were given recognition for their services, even while they resisted it.<sup>151</sup> Almost all of the visual material contributed then and now to Battle myths: old under-defended tramps and tankers being bombed or torpedoed; clouds of smoke in the sky, fires (especially off the US coast) dramatically lighting up the night; the few injured, oil-covered, shivering survivors on overloaded boats or pitiful rafts.

Documentary content ran from banal and illustrative to fully dramatised and analytical. The feature film Western Approaches had real seamen, in colour, playing themselves. Merchant Seamen [1940] featured more actual seamen from lost ships vowing to go on Merchant Navy gunnery courses when they got back home, and sinking U-Boats with their archaic deck-guns in their next convoy. Western Approaches, significantly, was made in 1944, after the climax of the Battle, and during a period of readjustment.<sup>152</sup> The Canadian Atlantic Patrol [1940] featured a simulated U-Boat hunt. Its chief influence was the way its 'authoritatively voiced narration' by "Lorne Greene became a convention in the genre", [vide Graves in Victory at Sea and Olivier in the World At War].<sup>153</sup> Davidson produced Heroes of the Atlantic for the National Film Board of Canada in 1942.<sup>154</sup> Fifteen minutes long, it purported to show Canada what its navy was doing: coastal defence, shipbuilding, with excellent footage and narration. Corvette Port Arthur and Action Stations [both 1943] similarly presented "dramatic demonstrations of the important roles the RCN played in the Atlantic."<sup>155</sup> They did not point out the problems of expansion, nor the political causes of the 18-month technological lag behind the Royal Navy which was responsible for its anti-submarine warfare impotence. They

<sup>151</sup> Lane 1990 op.cit. ch.3, "Rhetoric"; p.33-66.

<sup>152</sup> Snorkel-equipped U-Boats operated inshore, largely undetected, sinking few ships, yet largely immune from attack save in transit and deep water.

<sup>153</sup> Hadley et al 1996 op.cit p.44.

<sup>154</sup> AWM Film Record Sheet F01758: National Film Board of Canada, 1942.

<sup>155</sup> Hadley et al 1996 op.cit p.44-5.

did publicise the Royal Canadian Navy as it never was afterwards.<sup>156</sup> This was followed by the US feature Corvette K225 the following year, designed to counter much of the criticism Heroes had avoided.<sup>157</sup>

Documentaries provided information and ordinariness, newsreels action and drama. Features combined them.<sup>158</sup> While there were house styles and minor differences in type, the media during the war were "engaged in mutually reinforcing and plagiarising each others works."<sup>159</sup> They co-opted each other, producing not only guided propaganda and nationally-reinforcing materials acceptable to government. They also constructed, reconstructed, and recapitulated themes, subjects and topics acceptable to government departments, their owners, and some seamen. All engaged in producing images and ideas of seamen and Merchant Navies, and armed services, which did not diverge from producers' and audiences' expectations. These images and ideas were mythical: it was the action and the drama that won out. This is one reason why seamen often were not always grim, or overly worried or depressed about service at sea, for all that the myths they contributed to said they were. Most of them returned to sea after convoys or sinkings because they had to. Professional prewar seamen were placed in a reserved occupation after 1941. They couldn't afford to be ashore, not just because they felt duty bound, or they felt their nation demanded it. Working at sea was what they did. Losses and dangers were rarely so great that there were better reasons, for all the long hours, poor conditions and bad pay, to stay ashore, even had it been possible economically or politically. Most of them had not been sunk and would not be. The risk was present but the actual was not, for most of them, most of the time.<sup>160</sup>

The effect of Great War slaughter on literature and art, in an age (as Fussell says) steeped in nineteenth century literature, before film and later radio and TV had taken hold, was profound. Opinion is that the Second World

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<sup>156</sup> Save its expansion and support for the Royal Navy mentioned in Thames TV's 1973 "Wolfpack", and recent works.

<sup>157</sup> See footnote 150 above.

<sup>158</sup> Lane 1990 op.cit p.58.

<sup>159</sup> House styles were "Almost tongue-in-cheek understatement from the BBC, whimsy from Lord Beaverbrook's Daily Express, and half radical popularism, half hard-headed calculation about the nature of its readership, from the Daily Mirror." Ibid p.63.

War produced little great literature and poetry by comparison.<sup>161</sup> Nine wartime novels involved the Battle. Some led on from prewar Merchant Navy works, notably for both boys and adults by Westerman, reinforcing myths and attitudes about seamen and Britishness in general.<sup>162</sup> Wheatley's Strange Conflict prefigured post-war secret-mission novels.<sup>163</sup> Gilpatrick's Action In the North Atlantic was the basis of the Bogart film, while Forster's The Ship, Dixon's The Devil & the Deep, Jordan's Day Without Evening and Mallalieu's Very Ordinary Seaman, related life in warships and freighters.

Fiction about naval warfare, for the reasons given above about representations, was the least developed and used medium during the war.<sup>164</sup> There simply was not enough time, free imagination, space and commercial demand for much written war fiction, save smaller, cheaper versions of pre-war works. Feature film was propagandist, and it flourished to fiction's detriment. Novels conformed to wartime restrictions on quality, representation, and focus.<sup>165</sup> "Despite success as engaging narratives, few novels succeeded in making a motive...of boredom, or persuading readers that the horrors had not been melodramatised. One turned instead to memoirs written by participants not conscious of serving any elevated artistic ambitions."<sup>166</sup> Memoirs and news instead provided the mythic content fiction traditionally supplied. There was no reason to read fiction, when real live people were doing exciting and dangerous, or tragic, things.

War's end brought dramatic changes. The Merchant Navy became once again a totally civilian force, benefitting from the wartime culling of old ships and improvement in living standards, but little better represented or protected from the vagaries of market and government. Its wartime prominence in media and consciousness faded rapidly. Coastal Command was drastically reduced, and secrecy limited its publicising and demonstrating its wartime effectiveness. Western Approaches Command ceased to exist

<sup>160</sup> Regarding sailors lives and perception of duty see Lane 1990 op.cit pp.12-35, also Pillets, J, "Navy or Merchant? Torpedoes couldn't tell." at <http://www.bergen.com/region/marine9700195.htm>

<sup>161</sup> Fussell, P, The Great War and Modern Memory, O.U.P, London, 1975; Calder 1972, op.cit p.517-23.

<sup>162</sup> For more on created and supported Britishness see Lane 1990, op.cit, p.39.

<sup>163</sup> A Nazi shipping magnate used British contacts to entrap shipping, Allied merchant shipping.

<sup>164</sup> See p.87, and footnotes 114, 115.

<sup>165</sup> Fussell 1989 op.cit unfortunately had little on what wartime Germans were reading; pp.239, 240-1.

entirely; reduced and reallocated, its end depriving it and its personnel of much future voice. This once huge, specialised and war-winning command was cut to the size of the Royal Canadian Navy: less derided but little better known post-war, save by one film's popularity.<sup>167</sup> Canada capitalised on its war-built industrial heartland, while ignoring its navy's most important contribution. Canada's Merchant Navy was cut away to nothing and subjected to class and industrial warfare when it attempted resistance. America emerged with unparalleled power-projection, financial strength, confidence and outlook.<sup>168</sup> Germany, crushed and largely wrecked, also focussed on the future; rebuilding an economy, a private life for its citizens and later a consumer culture, while still maintaining some connections to older military and civil citizenship ideals and attitudes. All were shadowed by the end of an era, more dramatic and forceful than the Great War's end, and the emergence of a new political structure with terrible new weapons.

The next five decades and four eras of history and awareness would see the resolution of many outcomes. Other issues: remembrance and the position of ignored and disregarded military and civilian minorities, would remain as unresolved as since the end of the Great War. Some earlier representations had not been attempts to deal with these: they had been for official and service purposes, not private restitution. The war raised some representations to an apogee of skill and effectiveness they would rarely reach again. Propaganda fiction and history were poor representations, but documentary and cinema were distinctly better than almost all of what followed. The few naval wars after 1945 did not undermine misconceptions or create new attitudes or perspectives.<sup>169</sup> Myth would reign largely unabated, with propaganda muted, refocussed on recruitment, not supporting a war effort. Continuity endured. Familiar topics, themes, and forms of presentation (popular history, docu-dramatic cinema, memoirs), were presented in existing ways to a dedicated, informed audience. Mainstream commercial audiences wanted and bought excitement and action, perpetuating other myths, through

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid p.291.

<sup>167</sup> *The Cruel Sea*, 1953.

<sup>168</sup> Power-projection is a military term denoting the ability to project power: military forces, authority.

<sup>169</sup> Indeed the Falklands experience of naval and shipping co-operation, national pride and outrage, poor planning and 'muddling through' reinforced and supported existing memories, attitudes and portrayals.



book and cinema ticket sales. Eventually commercial and purely entertainment interests would dominate remembrance and balanced presentation of Navy and Merchant Navy operations and experiences. Memories and representation were here to stay. The consequences of the Battle were felt in debt, financial and manufacturing policy and relations for a decade and a half after the end of the war. Shipping and personnel losses impacted deeply upon ordinary people. They remembered such things as orange and sweet rationing ending in Britain in 1953, eight years after VE Day, and a decade after the climax of the campaign.

**HISTORY, CINEMA, FICTION AND DOCUMENTARY, 1945-60**

"This is a story of the Battle of the Atlantic. A story of an ocean, two ships, & a handful of men. The heroes are the men. The heroines are the ships. The only villain is the sea - the Cruel Sea - which man has made more cruel."

Monsarrat

When the Battle of the Atlantic ended in May 1945 its myths were firmly ensconced. The production of representations paused, as writers and audiences were perhaps simply too used to war and works about it. It was several years before participants began to record and rework their experiences and myths into forms others could read. Images and impressions of the Battle emerged and stabilised very quickly once that establishment phase began. Except for academic revisions, they have changed little since. What they did do was take on the power and force of the experiences they were drawn from. The style, tone, and content of the works became set forms of representation which have varied slightly and moved only slowly. In place of propaganda, only promotional materials for recruitment had government support. This deprived cinema of enormous resources and direction, as well as a focus on the majority of actual operations and experiences. The drive of cinema became solely commercial.

Personal accounts flourished, amid a huge burst of memoir and incidental writings about all aspects of the war. They were the most mythic. Propaganda and sensationalist emotions were gradually replaced by more staid, considered, but not analytical writing. Official accounts of operations and incidents dominated this Immediate Postwar phase. They were neither commercial nor emotively personal, but they too contributed to myth about the Battle. These works gave their audiences the classic impressions of the campaign. The brave seamen in their rusty old ships, the overworked escorts, the piratical enemy U-Boat men in their evil iron serpents, were one side. The other side was of an equally brave, dedicated band of elite submariners betrayed by leaders and technology, hunted by a powerful, vengeful, remorseless enemy backed by enormous resources.

Personal and biographical accounts from senior figures dominated history. Official unit and command accounts, (from flotillas, RAF squadrons and groups) emerged later. As mythology abounded in novels and films, (the latter largely silent on the Battle), the lack of counter-mythology in popular

accounts formed or hardened attitudes, with nothing factual or exploratory to analyse or counter them. General secondary accounts were understandably few and thin without the primary materials only official historians had access to. Only slight differences in tone and description [ie of the Germans] were visible between 1945 and 1960, or even 1974. General attitudes and descriptions changed little. Sources did not grow until the early 1970s. There were rigid walls between the services once the postwar sense of collective victory faded and competition for funding became an issue in changing times. These walls were even more rigid between the Merchant Navy and the services, due to differences in perspective, and the lack of appropriate lobbying. All of these affected what and how things were written.

Fiction emerged slowly, but was bolstered with a few early classics, providing templates for repetition and imitation used by following commercial successes. Only the Ultra era would be more prolific. Early war memoir-fictions of other campaigns such as the Quick and the Dead, the Thin Red Line and Catch-22 were as close to great literature on war as the Second World War produced compared to the Great War, producing only a few great works.<sup>1</sup> Maritime cinema in Britain depended on re-releases of wartime films for the rest of the decade, save the semi-peripheral Ealing comedy Whisky Galore [1948]. US cinema produced a near-peripheral classic tale, of ship versus submarine (though more than first appears), in 1957, then a poorly received raider versus convoy drama in 1960, before silence. The 1950s was the era of British war cinema heroes, and maritime stories. They, like US and German war cinema, flowered in the 1950s. British war films were overshadowed and demoted by new topics in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

British maritime films contained the Battle, but were combat films about incidents, not convoy dramas. Only two did not recreate famous events. All were commercial and limited in quality. All but one did not support the myth of the Battle directly. They used the Battle and parts of the myth from participant and recent memory to promote other things: surface actions or exciting incidents rather than the mundane vital convoy and anti-submarine warfare

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<sup>1</sup> Paris, M, op.cit p.ix.

<sup>2</sup> S.Frears in "Typically British: 100 Years of British Cinema", British Film Institute for Channel 4, 1994.

work the war depended on. Coastal Command was excluded, as was the Battle itself after 1952. This in a sense made up for the exclusion of conventional battlefleet features during the war. Cruel Sea singlehandedly represented Atlantic, Battle, and Western Approaches Command experience and myths, as well as Merchant Navy myths by inclusion. Though combat was popular, there were no films about Mediterranean surface operations.

An interesting and forgotten exception to the silence in postwar documentary about the Battle was India Strikes, made in 1946 by Bishu Sen. It covered war contributions to the army, Royal Air Force and Merchant Navy. Rarely before or after were Indians or their activities mentioned.<sup>3</sup> TV documentary material produced a single classic. In the less busy but less archived days of the 1950s and 60s, there may have been others.<sup>4</sup> NBC's reasonable effort in 1952 was the classic Victory at Sea: from the US Navy's near-official point of view. It was US-focussed almost all the way through, but it did place the Anglo-German war in context first, for all its wartime-style propaganda and mythologising of the enemy and the U-Boat.

Howard touches on the relation of remembrance to causes of conflict.<sup>5</sup> It was starkly different to the Great War, though its mourning language was still used.<sup>6</sup> Memorials had a different purpose.<sup>7</sup> Destruction of civilisation was emphasised instead of transcendental sacrifice. Mass death was common, not limited to the stereotypical Front. The Second World War moved, its Western Front was everywhere, even where no soldiers were. Remembrance was tempered by a peace and Cold War that lasted decades. Social life changed in Europe to a marked degree while wars were fought elsewhere. Morality wrestled with strategic bombing and its inevitable connection with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The very threat of nuclear war, and soon nuclear annihilation, made commemoration take on an entirely new aspect. Global extinction had never been possible before. If deterrence failed there would be no after to remember in. After thin attempts at civil defence, the public adjusted to a

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<sup>3</sup> Until 1994's Forgotten Heroes; Manvell 1974, op.cit p.233.

<sup>4</sup> They are probably beyond recall now, if they existed at all.

<sup>5</sup> Howard, M, 1983 op.cit.

<sup>6</sup> Winter, op.cit, p.8. Such language is still used today.

<sup>7</sup> Mosse in Fallen Soldiers, (Oxford University Press, NY, 1990), discusses the differences in memorials between the UK, West and East Germany and the USSR, p.201-25, but not the U-Boat memorials at Laboe or Moltenort.

preferred loosely fatalistic attitude, perhaps familiar to seamen on the Malta and Kola runs. These men knew there was nothing they could do and no rest to be gained by preparation.<sup>8</sup>

Fascination for Second World War deeds and a belief in a moral, decent fight by ordinary individuals and famous people was strongest in Britain.<sup>9</sup> The experience of war remembrance took a different form from that of the Great War, in more cinema and radio, then much more TV.<sup>10</sup> Media remembrance reminded the contemporary audience or informed and reinforced subsequent ones. It did not need to unrealistically communicate the experience as much wartime media had, or in stark horror; the antipathy of war was taken for granted. Everyone knew people killed by bombing, by fighting overseas or nearby, overwork, poor food or medicine. Universal suffering and loss was reinforced by the war's proximity and scale in a way the absentee slaughter of the Great War had not. Later, war also became again exciting (if not glorious or fun), especially for the postwar young untouched directly by the war, in an age of ever-increasing prosperity. The Great War at sea had been separate too: concentrated on U-boats and shipping, cruisers and capital ships. War on land and air was more often communicated directly, not via newsreels or newspapers. The war at sea remained separate and more alien than ever.

"The fighter pilot, the Panzer Leader, and especially the Para, were far more potent symbols of military machismo archetypes for adventurous adolescents....a more dramatic image than silent, invisible navies, bureaucratised mass armies and the disciplined destruction of bomber fleets."<sup>11</sup>

No trivialisation of the Atlantic battlefield or warrior was possible. The Atlantic experience could not be reduced as the Western Front had. It could not be put on a cigarette card, postcard or picture; made manageable, comprehensible.<sup>12</sup> For the Atlantic, unlike the Great War's Western Front (and more recent journeys to El Alamein, the Death Camps, the Burma Railway or Normandy) no 'battlefield tourism', whether pilgrimage as a sacred journey or as mere curiosity, was possible. There were no places to visit, only

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<sup>8</sup> Howard, *op.cit.*, p.29-30.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.

<sup>10</sup> The average person listened to 4.5 hours of radio per day during the war, an analogy to TV's current domination of culture and decline in literariness after the Great War; akin to low quality of war literature during and after the Second World War; Fussell 1989 *op.cit.*, p.181.

<sup>11</sup> Howard *op.cit.* p.68.

coordinates on an ever-changing, if not featureless, battlefield which seemed clean after swallowing all the devastation and death. Only Monsarrat, postwar, noticed what the last generation of liner passengers were actually travelling over, to his horror, disgust and recurring realisation.<sup>13</sup> Official commemoration paled beside the commercial demand for model tanks, guns, planes, and real memorabilia. After the Great War trivialisation had, as Mosse relates, taken the form of postcards, tin soldiers, theatre film and songs, as well as that battlefield tourism which ebbed away by 1928.<sup>14</sup> After 1945 it re-emerged later, but remained.<sup>15</sup> Tin and later plastic war toys and models, both boy-sized and miniature, were more popular than ever, though mass-production and cost meant the wooden homemade was for long the rule. Model-building and toy-gun-using children in the 1950's became the gun-badge-and-miniature-collecting adults of later decades. Expensive miniatures and copied relics marketed to middle-aged Baby-Boomers are now as profitable as toys.<sup>16</sup> Ship models, especially Second World War ship models, remain the least popular of all genres; science-fiction has a larger share of the product, below tanks aircraft and soldiers, well behind cars bikes and trucks.<sup>17</sup>

Official naval commemoration, after as before the war, could not compete with other services. This meant that the Battle became relatively less visible, less commemorated. Tanks on manoeuvres, artillery, and aircraft - especially exciting new jets roaring low overhead - captured the imagination. Navy days were as before the war: pageantry, children clambering around shining brass and gleaming paint, slides and sticky buns, big guns and big things. There was even a little gunfire. There was no movement: no realistic manoeuvres, no simulated sub-hunt by a corvette, the naval equivalent of attention-grabbing mock battles with smoke drifting and guns cracking over a well-mown grass field, or aerobatics and noise overhead. Ships were

<sup>12</sup> Mosse, Hynes, Samuel, Fussell, all discuss trivialisation of the Western Front, excluding battlefields elsewhere.

<sup>13</sup> Monsarrat, N, *Monsarrat At Sea*, Cassell, London, 1976, p.6.

<sup>14</sup> Mosse, op.cit p.126-56.

<sup>15</sup> Those who served now wish to remember, and being retired, are able to travel; they were not able to decades ago.

<sup>16</sup> Bailey, S, "Born Again Kids", *Black&White Magazine*, Australian Edition, Number 25, June 1997, pp.18-20.

<sup>17</sup> Model ships require more complicated injection-mouldings, thus making them more expensive (with lower sales), as well as more complex to assemble; from British, German, American, & Japanese catalogues reviewed, 1960-98; Kawlath, W, *Plastic Model Kits*, Falken-Verlag GmbH, Niederhausen, Germany, 1990, p.6-7.

stationary, when people viewed them.<sup>18</sup> Before the war corvettes did not exist. There had been only rare sub hunts by fleet destroyers practicing capital-ship defence, no anti-submarine warfare trade-protection exercises involving ASDIC since its invention.<sup>19</sup>

In factual and fictional material there was a strong but explicable concentration upon the activities of surface raiders, which determined capital ship operations and dispositions more than the Battle. *Graf Spee*, *Bismarck* and *Scharnhorst*, which had to be fought and sunk by Royal Navy warships (with a little help from aircraft), ended up disproportionately famous for their effectiveness. The same happened across the Atlantic in Canada. Ironically, the "wartime experience so shunned by the regular Royal Canadian Navy became *raison d'être* for Cold War expansion and world-class anti-submarine warfare capability."<sup>20</sup> 'Future' Battles were manipulated to maintain anti-submarine warfare against attacks in the 1950's. "Staff histories of the Battle were forgotten."<sup>21</sup>

The power of lobby-groups was plainly visible, even as the big gun was scrapped and the Royal Navy became the carrier and escort force it has remained. The essential lessons of English seapower that Drake and Nelson knew were pushed aside for the glory we remember them for. This was more than just a fight for funding and security. Glory was all-important, even at the expense of reality and perspective. Concentration on the big gun led to the peripheralisation of anti-submarine warfare technology and convoy escort before the war.<sup>22</sup> This caused chaotic and dangerous deficits in planning and escort provision until 1942. After 1945 the media concentrated on the same outdated concepts and events, not the lessons and rules gathered so painfully in 1939-45 (and 1914-18...). Grove discussed postwar British naval policy, and the Battle's effect on Cold War anti-submarine warfare, not publicity or perceptions.<sup>23</sup> Why both Battles were not used to promote Cold War anti-submarine warfare remains inexplicable, save that discussion of and support

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<sup>18</sup> Kennedy, L, 1974 op.cit, p.58.

<sup>19</sup> Winton, 1983 op.cit p.123.

<sup>20</sup> Milner, M, *The U-Boat Hunters*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis MD, 1994, p.258.

<sup>21</sup> Grove, E, "The Modern View: the Battle & Postwar Naval Policy" in Howarth & Law op.cit, p.581.

<sup>22</sup> Lobbying, glory and naval guns: van der Vat, D, *Stealth At Sea*, Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, 1994, p.136.

<sup>23</sup> Grove in Howarth and Law op.cit, p.576-83.

for it proceeded between Royal Navy and Government, in secret, and would be fought with classified technology, not public support.

The gradual recession from memory and the lack of trivialisation possible on the battlefield had entirely different consequences. They were both positive and negative. No trivialisation meant the Battle could not be parodied and mocked. It also meant it hardly penetrated culture. It created a plaintive sense of loss and inadequate commemoration among its participants. This was directly transferred to their writings. Instead of their commemoration and recognition being official, public, and prominent, it became private, individual, and continuous. Their works took on not only the strong memories and impressions of their experiences, they also took on an increasing sense of being forgotten and bypassed. They felt people had moved past them. The world got on with rebuilding, with living with austerity, with the boom that followed it, with new wars and new events, and then with commemorating other things.

After the initial wave of personal Royal Navy, Coastal Command and Merchant Navy books, in the decade following the end of the war four of every five books about the Battle was by a Naval man. Each service and lobby-group tried to prove that it had been the key to defeating Germany, with the other services aiding, abetting, and attacking its efforts.<sup>24</sup> There were a number of books written by researchers of the Merchant Navy's story or merchant captains, most too scarred to talk about or publicise experience, but none lodged in the national consciousness.<sup>25</sup> Royal Navy convoy stories were of warriors and warships, convoy though central to theme was peripheral to action. No histories entered mass awareness. 'Classic' histories, novels and films, only entered a 'canon' of Battle works. There is little agreement about which works are in it. The public, both during and after the war, were aware of the enormous sacrifices made by seamen, but they never gained the glory that

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<sup>24</sup> Bomber Command's refusal to pass long-range aircraft to Coastal Command undoubtedly lengthened and deepened the Battle: the five-week victory over the U-Boat in April-May 1943 was ensured with a few dozen transferred aircraft, mostly VLR Consolidated Liberators.

<sup>25</sup> The way combatants commemorate Anniversaries, but bombing survivors did not, until recently.



Royal Air Force Bomber and Fighter Command, or Monty's Eighth Army achieved for their self-promotional efforts.<sup>26</sup>

The real composition of crews - largely Commonwealth but with international members - was also pointed out, but with decreasing frequency after the mid-1950s.<sup>27</sup> One third of British crews were colonial in origin: Lascars, Indians, African, Hong Kong Chinese, Caribbean. Very few photos in early books, and none in later ones, were of these men. As Lascars and Indians were usually engine-room and boiler staff, not deck personnel (depending on the company involved), their losses were highest, when ships were hit. Chinese stewards were unseen. Not until the late 1970's did histories begin to re-admit the presence of these loyal subjects of the Crown despite their numbers and losses. These men were ignored by history, and even when seen, their sacrifice went unrewarded.<sup>28</sup> Unlike the 'Fuzzy-wuzzy angels', however, the white merchantmen in this story were little better rewarded than their colonial comrades. There was certainly no compensation or pension provision for non-white seamen in the British Merchant Navy, nor has any been given or considered.<sup>29</sup> This was the result of Indian and Pakistani independence in 1947: no-one felt responsible, and other more massive problems took priority.

Merchant seamen and navies were gently and slowly forgotten after the Second World War. Thousands of medals were awarded, and a memorial was built in London with the names of all British ships lost and the names of 28,301 men with no known graves upon it. Rarely elsewhere was it mentioned.<sup>30</sup> The Imperial War Museum had small displays in the 1950's, but in the annals of the War, in memories and on shelves, it occupied a small place.<sup>31</sup> Seamen and what they accomplished and endured faded from sight. Unlike the Navy or Air Force, there was no Admiralty or Air Ministry to back them. The Board of

<sup>26</sup> Self-promotion took many forms: lecture tours, memoirs, public appearances, ongoing roles in NATO. Merchant Navy men, senior or otherwise, had much lower profiles, compared to senior wartime Air or army figures, who could draw support from battles like Alamein or operations like the Dams Raid.

<sup>27</sup> Cameron did, but not later accounts.

<sup>28</sup> Like the 'Fuzzy-wuzzy angels' of the Kokoda Trail.

<sup>29</sup> *Forgotten Heroes*, 1994 op.cit.

<sup>30</sup> The Imperial War Graves Commission Tower Hill Merchant Navy memorial to "Merchant seamen with no known grave" was approved by HM Queen Elizabeth in March 1955; *Trident* magazine, April 1955, p.179.

<sup>31</sup> MacIntyre 1956 op.cit, introduction.

Trade had no interest in captains or seamen, only with the resumption of normal trading and shipping after the victory. Shipping companies were more concerned with trade, postwar conditions, ships and cargoes than in any recognition or memorialisation of the men who had the highest percentage losses in any theatre save the U-boat crews who actually opposed them.<sup>32</sup> After this the Battle itself largely faded.

The Merchant Navy's postwar loss of prestige and fame was due to several factors. They were not 'fighting men' like the Navy or the bomber crews. They had no lobby group representing them other than the civilian shipping companies, and the Board of Trade, neither of which was concerned with demanding publicity or memorials to the suffering and sacrifices.<sup>33</sup> The role and effectiveness of seaman's unions was not great. Unions were the only organisations which could take on the job of promoting and supporting seamen's rights to deserved rewards, yet they were rarely mentioned.<sup>34</sup> Wartime agreements between Governments and Unions were partly to blame for this silence. Industrial action could be defined treachery in the face of the enemy and dealt with accordingly. Unions should have been very active in promoting the needs and sacrifices of seamen during and after the conflict. Their powers and rights were overridden by wartime emergency legislation, and it was simpler and easier to agree with government rather than face legal attack and extinction for 'the duration', and perhaps beyond.<sup>35</sup>

There was an essential lack of glamour in the Merchant Navy. There was precious little in escort forces but shooting and steaming could be made to seem as such - and certainly heroic if necessary - compared to steaming slowly in large groups and dying undefended. There was and is nothing heroic about plodding in lines and ranks getting killed helplessly while your companions were forced by circumstance to keep moving past your sinking ship or lifeboat. Thus there was very little that could be eulogised or publicised

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<sup>32</sup> Apart from extensive mentions in Company histories, which were only read by employees and other members of the minority audience; Lane 1990 op.cit pp.25, 227.

<sup>33</sup> Sources are regrettably largely negative: there is no evidence that they did. Memorials and commemorations were not within their brief. Those were handled by the services and the Imperial War Graves Commission, which considered then that merchant seamen did not fall within their scope.

<sup>34</sup> Postwar unions were more concerned with rebuilding power-bases eroded by wartime practices, and with holding or improving existing rights for seamen, not with building monuments to the fallen.

<sup>35</sup> Lane 1990 op.cit pp.41, 61, 80, 111, 145-7, 174, 184.

in the way gun battles, torpedo runs, depthcharging and ramming, could be made exciting, glamorous, heroic and famous. Compared to attacking enemy warships against poor odds, cavalry charges against artillery, or dambusting, Merchant Navy activities had little or no potential for permanent mythologising in the Hollywood or Borehamwood traditions.

Most operational and personal histories and memoirs were written in the Immediate Post-war period, in a time of relatively high public interest. This was largely before Roskill's official Royal Navy history, War At Sea, was published (1954-61), but the period during which it was researched and written. Histories were mythical or non-mythical, merely presenting operations unalloyed with personal or general misconceptions about the Battle's losses or effectiveness. Official histories tended to non-mythology, with editorial styles as part of larger official series. They were staid in approach, free of hyperbole, excessive attention to detail, or particular viewpoints beyond their service. Popular histories and memoirs had fewer restraints. All supported mythology in certain ways. Like wartime works, there were silences, omissions, and types of representation. Royal Navy/ex-Royal Navy authors used Admiralty sources, which immediately gave structure, rationality and selection. None such existed in Merchant Navy records.<sup>36</sup>

Pulleston's early Influence of Sea Power in WW2, 1947, intended to "observe strategic leadership, and the consequences of battles." It was "not a narrative, nor critique of operations." After defining Mahanian seapower, treaties, disarmament and build-up, it concentrated however on seabattles rather than campaigns, on naval actions, not the Battle. Convoy or anti-submarine warfare shortcomings were little discussed. America's relative ignorance of Britain under threat solidified. Two of Morison's classic non-official History of US Naval Operations in WW2 volumes covered the Battle very well, avoiding wartime judgements by or of the US Navy, bypassing much of the controversy which flared and simmered due to political and strategic differences.<sup>37</sup> He gave seamen and auxiliaries their due, as well as shipbuilding and operations,

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<sup>36</sup> The use of RN sources also tended to reinforce certain tones and styles on the writing.

<sup>37</sup> Morison did however pillory King for his policies regarding and resulting from the U-Boat offensives off the US coast.

while keeping a US Naval and national focus. It set the standard. H.M.S.O published lists of British Vessels Lost at Sea, and gazettes, in 1947.

Roskill's Official Royal Navy history emerged later, covering the entire war, though Atlantic anti-submarine warfare chapters could be read separately. Ultra was excluded but not missed. There was no separate official history of Royal Air Force Coastal Command, only classified staff histories almost unavailable until recently.<sup>38</sup> Coastal Command never received adequate coverage or analysis, much less recognition, sandwiched uncomfortably in Royal Air Force Official History between far more famous fighter exploits, and more derided and ineffective but very forceful and emotive bomber operations.<sup>39</sup> Much of the achievement, and the weapons and sensors used, were kept secret, now there was a new enemy, with a burgeoning submarine fleet of its own, and access to captured German technology. It lacked the famous biographical books and features both Bomber and Fighter Commands benefitted from.<sup>40</sup> Thompson's little-known Aircraft Against U-Boat, gave an official account of Royal New Zealand Air Force operations. Later secondary works accidentally continued this exclusion and sidelining. Early personal accounts by senior personnel like Joubert and Slessor only partly covered the Battle. Much later works by Bowyer were only read by participants and the converted.<sup>41</sup> Kemp's Victory At Sea, 1957, Creswell's Sea Warfare 1939-45, Hinsley's Command of the Sea, 1950, and Hitler's Strategy, 1951, discussed the seapower of the opposing nations.

Standing between official naval histories and shipping company works, was Strong's centennial commemorative Flying Angel: the Story of the Missions to Seamen, 1956. Only a limited amount covered both wars, with no experiences, partly due to space. It assumed "the reader's familiarity with the courage of seamen."<sup>42</sup> It mentioned Western Approaches and also J. Lennox-Kerr's 1953 oral history Touching the Adventures of Merchantmen in the

<sup>38</sup> Law in Howarth and Law op.cit p.600.

<sup>39</sup> Akin to the highly-charged, mythologised, service and slaughter of the Great War's trenches.

<sup>40</sup> Admittedly the RAF legend is borne almost entirely by Reach For the Sky, [1953] and The DamBusters [1955].

<sup>41</sup> Such works were highly specialised, without the background and supporting information required by the general public. They were also technical and often deeply jargonised, further narrowing their demographic.

<sup>42</sup> Strong, L, Flying Angel: the Story of the Missions to Seamen, Methuen, London, 1956, p.147.

Second World War. It pointed out "the unspectacular and the merely useful never gets its due."<sup>43</sup> Missions played, though it was not said, an important role in supporting seamen from sunk and damaged ships, as well as those merely down on their luck. Behrens' classic Merchant Shipping and the Demands of War, 1955, provided administrative and operational history, but brief, mythic experiences, and captioned photographs of 'types' of British master...while Campbell's Salute The Red Duster, 1952 and Lewis's Ships and Seamen of Britain, 1946, related mythic experiences only. Self-promoting American shipping head Land provided Behrens' American equivalent with Ships For Victory, 1951 and Winning the War With Ships, 1958. Logistics not described by Roskill or Behrens had to be dug from Postan's British War Production, 1952 & Hall's North American Supply, 1955; lengthy, adequate, but disparate. Merchant operations were not as unified as naval operations.

Saunders' Valiant Voyaging and Holman's In Danger's Hour were typical of the solid shipping company histories which made up the limited history of the Merchant Navy at war, along with Roskill's A Merchant Fleet at War, dealing solely with Holt's Blue Funnel Line. Their coverage tended towards the thorough, but often included occurrences outside the Atlantic. Seamen had no phoney war, even if accounts of actions and losses were staid. These were top-down master/chief-engineer's histories: ordinary seamen were not authors and Lascars and other non-British were also limited participants. Content kept the war at bay and lessened its interference with ordinary life. In Danger's Hour spared the reader common trite nothings of great company management and happy workers. Roskill pointed out Holt's insistence on boat drill, small-vessel handling and survival training kept many seamen and passengers alive. This was not boasting: experience and knowledge are generally all that stands between life and death in war, luck plays a very small part in a lifeboat or bomber.<sup>44</sup> Valiant Voyaging ignored analysis of shipping's value or its relationship to the war effort; the climax of 1943 was mentioned, but not discussed. This could be taken as read in 1948.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p.130.

<sup>44</sup> Those who could handle their lifeboats and survival gear, had a better chance, just as those bomber crews who knew about icing and timing and manoeuvring had a better chance over Germany. On the other hand, when A Merchant Fleet at War [Alfred Holt & Co, London, 1962] was published, it was available to current Blue Funnel employees at a reduced price, not free, and some who paid never saw their copies: Bell, T, pers comm, 1998.

Always at the back was a list of ships employed, ships and men lost, or if too many, those awarded medals. In Valiant Voyaging even Lascars given awards were included. At least some were officially recognised postwar, for service and sacrifice.

Postwar representations continued the same vein as wartime propaganda, slowly losing hyperbolic description and tone but never their unrepresentative focus on action and drama. Creighton's Convoy Commodore, 1956, contained an early counter-mythical statement.

"Atlantic convoys were drab, monotonous, and unending. Some trundled back and forth for five years without seeing ships sunk or a shot fired."<sup>45</sup>

Elsewhere it was close to prewar content, mixing discussion of the Great War's Atlantic Battle, "Canadian Britishness", Merchant Navy snobbery and independence,<sup>46</sup> spivs and black marketeers, with tales of cargo shifting, collisions, bad weather, and inevitably, attacks and sinkings.<sup>47</sup>

Campaign history varied from Campbell & MacIntyre's classic The Kola Run, 1958 to the early Ordeal Below Zero, 1955 by Blonde, the first Arctic Convoy book. Patchily based on eyewitnesses, press reports and Admiralty gazettes, it focussed on fighting. PQ-17 featured, yet with the pointed Admiralty silence about the convoy, there was little to be said beyond the bare events. It was to be nearly two more decades before both official documents and Ultra would reveal who was responsible, and how decisions were made. Famous events received coverage in Kenworthy's Battle of the River Plate, 1946, later supporting commercial film in Powell's well-researched Last Voyage of the Graf Spee, 1956. Prominent young historian Pope provided another version of the Battle of the River Plate, 1956, and later the same year, another less known, never filmed account of the Barents Sea battle, 73 North. Schull's Far Distant Ships, 1952 described Royal Canadian Navy operations, largely neglecting the Atlantic battle as all Canadian sources would until 1979.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Creighton 1956 op.cit p.124.

<sup>46</sup> Creighton, op.cit, p.18, p.141; p.55-6.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p.34, 132-8; see Ch.5: "1974-89" of this thesis for discussion of equally mythic cover art.

<sup>48</sup> Save Easton's excellent 1963 memoir 50 North.

Chalmers's Max Horton & Western Approaches, 1954, described the life of a key figure, while his less flamboyant predecessor Noble received little attention. Wemyss's Relentless Pursuit was written for a knowing audience.<sup>49</sup> Robertson's Walker RN, 1956, gave a better picture of the man and his ships, though written shortly after Wemyss's re-release. Robertson's 1957 Golden Horseshoe related the life of opponent Otto Kretschmer, in standard populist form. Famous escort commander MacIntyre interestingly commented introducing his 1956 memoirs U-Boat Killer that it was unrealistic Atlantic Battle novels that drew him to write.<sup>50</sup> While it was "a radical polemic against wartime Royal Canadian Navy shortcomings", this was confined to a few pages only, even if he did not examine or illuminate the referred-to vast expansion and problems the Royal Canadian Navy was experiencing.<sup>51</sup> He lost few ships from all the convoys he escorted: none before March 1943. He pointed out the clear statistic that of 2353 British ships lost 1939-45 only 19 were lost while under joint air and surface escort.<sup>52</sup> Counter-myth was present, but hard to find. Other key men received biographies in later eras, after Vian's autobiography Action This Day, 1960. Pears' British Battleships, 1957, was an early technical volume, before Bradford's 1959 Mighty Hood narrated the life of Britain's most beloved warship.

German works appeared after 1952. The most prominent feature of all postwar German writing was the exclusion of political and moral judgement, save a few pieces by Niemoller.<sup>53</sup> As with former Allied writers, Germans described actions and operations without relating actual experiences. The extreme and the exciting were included, but rarely the mundane, and never the boredom and tension between. One major change from earlier works was that the latter revealed, before Buchheim, the toughness and terror of U-Boat life, though he remained its most potent and literate exponent. "Defeatism was equated with authenticity".<sup>54</sup> All were spread on a spectrum of tragedy-hagiography-defamation. Another new feature was the idea that all U-Boat men were neither heroes nor war-criminals, merely dutiful and obedient. U-

<sup>49</sup> Such as slang, terminology, assumed familiarity with Liverpool environs. It was reprinted from Walker's Groups in the Western Approaches published by the Liverpool Daily Post newspaper.

<sup>50</sup> One inevitably wonders which unrealistic novels....MacIntyre, 1956 op.cit, p.ix.

<sup>51</sup> Milner, 1994 op.cit, p.259.

<sup>52</sup> MacIntyre 1956, loc.cit.

<sup>53</sup> Only very much later Cremer 1982 (his last page) & Topp, 1991, have moved beyond mere narrative.

Boats were animated, men reduced to pawns in their bellies, prey of technology and leadership. The U-Boat as icon was separated from other representations.<sup>55</sup> The other new genre was East German. These were, naturally, anti-fascist and anti-capitalist, equating socialist struggle against wealth with servicemen's struggle, making the poor serving men as much victims as apologist West Germans did. They added little to the mass, other than equally turgid, this time Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist, jargon.<sup>56</sup> Ironically, as Hadley points out, two of the best books on or about U-Boat men were British, with participant's assistance: Robertson's 1957 Kretschmer biography Golden Horseshoe, and Griffin's 1968 novel An Operational Necessity.<sup>57</sup> This did not sit well with many German participants, who deplored the need for non-participants and foreigners to tell the tale. Political and moral issues, as in technical histories and East German accounts, remained absent.

All postwar German accounts shared a light speaker-to-reader style, distinct from jolly Great War books, save Dönitz's autobiography and Ruge's academic history.<sup>58</sup> Post-Second World War works showed what Hitler's aggression had brought to Germany, and the impact of defeat. There was discussion, without celebration, of events and operations, though there was often pride in the ships and men. Bekker had been a wartime Naval Intelligence officer: avoiding personal attacks by using a pen-name.<sup>59</sup> He had nothing to fear from old comrades, never deviating from dogma. Busch had been a Great War U-Boat officer, and continued postwar to write equally poor and inaccurate U-Boat 'faction'. Ruge's Sea Warfare, 1939-45, a German Viewpoint, uniquely presented a German academic account of the war at sea. It reflected wartime perceptions rather than the actual situation, much like Swastika at Sea. It established Germany's significance between the USSR and the western sea-powers, defined seapower but never applied it to operations, largely ignoring war on commerce which was the focus of German seapower. Odd pages on U-Boat war were scattered among minesweeping

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<sup>54</sup> Hadley op.cit p.112.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid p.127.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid 121-3, 136-7.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 4, "1960-74."

<sup>58</sup> Brenneke's Ghost Cruiser HK.33, 1954, and The Hunters and The Hunted, 1958, F-O Busch's The Drama of the Scharnhorst, Bekker's Swastika At Sea, both 1954, and later Hitler's Naval War, and The German Navy, 1974.

<sup>59</sup> His real name was Hans Dieter Berenbock.



and Luftwaffe operations. It explained the command structure, but nothing of German grand strategy, Dönitz's staff or personal relations, the heart of German experience of the Battle. There was no analysis of German collapse, or the war's beginning or ending, no condemnation of any leadership. Very emotionally restrained, there were no German equivalents of Vian's "the Navy's here."<sup>60</sup>

In all these works Nazism was never mentioned, and nor was there any discussion of war aims other than generally about blockade-running, commerce raiding, and ships and U-Boat roles. This was partly done to avoid any discussion of whom the authors had been employed by and dedicated to. It was also a sign of their struggle with Nazism, warfare, and killing. Metzler's Laughing Cow covered 1941-45 in only 11 pages toward the back of his book, after the 'Happy Times'. As with all pre-war U-Boat commanders he had merchant navy training before service in the Kriegsmarine, and hated sinking merchant shipping and harming civilians, even armed and hostile ones. All strove to be non-political. Schaeffer, who refused to surrender on 4 May 1945 and in agreement with his crew, took *U-977* to Argentina submerged, even went so far as to say his work could "offend no-one."<sup>61</sup> He concentrated on the famous long run to Argentina, which everyone wanted to read about then. As with Allied writers the famous unusual incident was concentrated on, the 'Knight's Cross factor' in place of the 'VC' factor.

Weyher and Ehrlich's Black Raider and Brennecke's Ghost Cruiser HK-33 were works characteristic of another kind of war, with the same tenor as U-boat memoirs. The war was kinder for surface raiders, for they could rescue seamen before they sank ships, and took prisoners where time and situation allowed. All raider captains save one were honourable, careful, humane men, who provided for their prisoners, and save when attacked by Royal Navy warships rarely lost a seaman. As all the *Hilfskreuzer* ["auxiliary cruisers"] had only one mission each, they were invariably tales of preparations, escape from British blockade, commerce-raiding in distant oceans - Pacific, Indian, South

<sup>60</sup> This famous catchphrase of the *Altmark* operation was quite apocryphal, according to Vian.

<sup>61</sup> In which case, why bother writing at all? Schaeffer, H, U-Boat 977, William Kimber, London, 1953, Introduction, np.

Atlantic - and the inevitable, fatal meeting with a Royal Navy warship.<sup>62</sup> For most this meant a short hard fight and sinking, with great losses. Only *Kormoran* got in the lucky first hit, though she was lost sinking her attacker.<sup>63</sup> As with U-Boat books there was the light, familiar style, no joy in sinking merchant shipping, and nothing of government, regime, or war aims.

Hessler's 1989 U-Boat War in the Atlantic 1939-45 was a reprint of a once secret Admiralty work, combining all the operational reports captured from German records in 1945. It was a goldmine of primary operational information for the serious researcher, but contained little for the ordinary reader of 1989. Long restricted, it played little part in generating perceptions. As Admiralty serial restricted documents, the Führer Naval Conferences, 1946, with commentary (in Brassey's Naval Annual for 1948) had value in documenting wartime German perceptions, but the sheer fact that it recorded only perceptions about what was actually occurring, with little recourse to commentary, limited it. Reports drawn from rough notes or memories afterwards lowered its accuracy. It was of most value to the academic due to its content, not its focus or brief narrative. All this could be gained from the 1990 Foreword, by noted German historian Mallmann Showell.<sup>64</sup> The rest of the foreword was explanatory: terms, prominent people mentioned in the text. Mallmann Showell seriously downgraded Dönitz's importance at the beginning, stating (correctly) he was at the bottom of a long Chain of Command, in what many considered an undesirable and unimportant position, like Royal Navy anti-submarine warfare; as Kommodore of U-Boats [FdU] holding the rank and responsibility of a cruiser captain.

Raeder's 1960 My Life portrayed the German navies of both wars as apolitical, failing to illustrate its or his culpability. The ancient Hanseatic league died long before the creation of the German state, and the German merchant service's influence over the Reichsmarine ebbed quickly after the ascension of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Raeder was nevertheless self-serving, inaccurate, and misleading, to distance himself from his government, the Holocaust, and any notion of aggression and delusion. There has been no other biography of

<sup>62</sup> Only *Orion* survived to return to Germany, though *Thor* began a second cruise before her destruction.

<sup>63</sup> HMAS *Sydney*; though conspiracy theorists would have it otherwise.

<sup>64</sup> Mallmann-Showell, J., 1990 op.cit, p.vii-xi.

Raeder since, save Bird's brief account.<sup>65</sup> He was quite as misled as any naval leader between the wars as to the real nature of seapower, and while he considered U-Boats and aircraft important, he nevertheless committed the Kriegsmarine and Germany to secret reconstruction, commerce raiding by large warships instead of small craft, and enhancing his position with Hitler by allowing his leader his head.<sup>66</sup>

Dönitz's 1959 Ten Years and Twenty Days was total myth. While a solid autobiographical and operational history, detailing his early life and Great War service, it lacked any appealing personal touch. With Ruge it was devoid of the light, easy, comfortable flow which characterised German writing about the war. After decades of writing emotionless reports Dönitz could no longer do otherwise. Everything happening to the U-Boat arm and then to the navy as a whole, was coldly related. There was nothing of his personal life, little even of headquarters life and the very close relationships with staff officers, and individual commanders, who all benefitted from personal interviews and contact at every stage of their careers. This was one reason (along with Dönitz's concern for their safety), morale remained so high until the end. A critical biography did not emerge until 1984.

Prien's I Sank The Royal Oak, ghostwritten by Weymar, portrayed a successful man. Wartime novels and nonfiction are propagandist, and ghostwritten works for aces are likely to be more so. Hurriedly published in 1940 by the Wehrmacht and Goebbels's propaganda ministry, but not in English until 1954, it resembled another, better known, wartime volume by another ace who had a famous operation but didn't survive. Gibson's 1943 Enemy Coast Ahead had the same blend of childhood memories, unfolding professional service, and classic famous operation. We perceive them differently, Gibson a 'good guy', Prien a 'bad'. Even if he was brave and dutiful, he was still a Nazi as most Germans professed to be (ie a supporter of Hitler and making Germany strong and respected again). Prien like Gibson distrusted the machinery of fame and fortune; this U-boat ace, like flying aces, preferred the company of equals. We perceive them differently because ex-seaman Prien

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<sup>65</sup> Bird, "Raeder" in Howarth 1992 op.cit.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

saw the effects of his war. None of this made it into the autobiography. Weymar based his account on a few hours with Prien and "his own hyperactive imagination", and later admitted "it was written for schoolboys." He "made a liar and a braggart out of his subject", and "was horrified" to find his 'spatchcocked text' being published unmodified, "complete with swastika on the cover" in English in 1954. "He tried and failed to obstruct" this.<sup>67</sup> Most importantly, it shows just how popular, irrespective of quality, any material about famous events and people was in Britain in the Immediate Post-War era. This kind of popularity had already occurred, with Great War U-Boat accounts, between the wars. Royal Oak was even reissued hardcover in 1969, probably as a 30<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary commemorative gesture. This was a little early for the 30-Year Rule, even if it had been a reappraisal, which it was not.

Atlantic Battle fiction took time to separate from other popular and prominent theatres - the Mediterranean, fleet or flotilla operations, coastal craft. National preferences were based on perceptions of where the action was, generated by early postwar and wartime fiction and nonfiction. Novels were commercial, as well as personal. They tended to be single, not serial. All, even Merchant Navy tales, were by former servicemen. German exponents tended, in short cheap *Landser* novels, to concentrate on U-Boats. Britons wrote about destroyers, corvettes, tugs, freighters, and German conventional warships or semi-fictional auxiliary commerce raiders. These provided a suitably noble and humanitarian life for a 'good German', compared to the heartlessness of submarine warfare. It also allowed (given the ability to take prisoners) recreating endless pirates versus captives subterfuge, hostage-hijacker relationships and romance, as in earlier maritime novels, and novels set in ages past. Old romantic notions were combined with Great or Second World War dialogue. The apogee for submarine warfare was not set until 1973. The campaign was illustrated by Germans, Britons and Americans including the also-filmed (after modification) Sharks & Little Fish and The Enemy Below, 1957.

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<sup>67</sup> van der Vat, D, "Prien" in Howarth 1992 op.cit, p.395.

There were two Canadian contributions, rarely seen after, and never copied or repeated. Sclater's Haida [1947] glamorised and celebrated regular-navy destroyers. This participant carved out a Canadian connection to older famous European naval sites.<sup>68</sup> "Landlubber Hugh Garner" added Storm Below in 1949. This less-authentically told contribution to Canadian myth was the story of a corvette of raw landsmen in the Atlantic. They purported to be Canada itself: a mix of backgrounds converging into a Canadian Naval identity. Men from the plains and the cities, from East and West coast middleclass jobs and rural occupations, Jews, antisemites, and a stereotyped Quebecois with "atrociously fractured English".<sup>69</sup>

These ordinary commercial fictions used the same actions, characters, plot elements, beginnings, descriptions, climaxes and endings as other genres. Men to be identified with were introduced, their past and plausibility established. Situations were established, problems demonstrated, then the course of the novel set to run. Difficulties and enemies were confronted, and faced down or run from, to lead to later confrontations. The climax was approached, the foe beaten, the loose ends of the novel tied up. C.S. Forrester, a man rightfully noted more for his Napoleonic-era warship tales (including the immortal, if not brilliant Hornblower), was thin on the Second World War era. His 1955 Good Shepherd was indicative of the straightforward convoy-escort anti-submarine warfare novel of the time, less developed than Cruel Sea but better executed than its descendants. This was surprising given Forrester's meticulous skill at writing multi-volume episodic literature of another era.<sup>70</sup> Single novels freed writers to be less romantic about and attached to their heroes. They could be more brutal, and extreme: killing their characters in the cause of the plot or theme.<sup>71</sup> Later decades would bring repetitive novels populated with familiar character types led by miraculously surviving heroes. The power of real events infused fiction: the wrecking of SS *Cabinet Minister* [in reality, SS *Politician*] in Whisky Galore, the Scapa Flow mutiny in HMS Ulysses - along with the events and characters perhaps plagiarised from

<sup>68</sup> Hadley et al 1996 op.cit pp.46-7.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, pp.47-8.

<sup>70</sup> Even if his prewar Hornblower was markedly better than his postwar.

<sup>71</sup> Though no-one defined HMS Ulysses as tragedy, some elements were present: calamity, striking in nature, proceeding from actions and chance befalling conspicuous people, contrasting previous happiness or glory, evoking pity and so on.

Northern Escort - as well as all of Monsarrat's experiences, in The Cruel Sea. Another feature was their victim-focus: the ship was always under threat whether merchant, escort or raider, never on the offensive, even when counterattacking.

Even the good novels were stuck with what the Oxford Book of the Sea described as "an exhaustion of descriptive metaphor" common to all commercial fiction of the twentieth century, whether British, North American or German.<sup>72</sup> Most readers and authors moved in the literary tradition of the later, lesser, commercial works of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, not the high, rich literary tradition of the early to mid nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup> Atlantic Battle authors were raised in a tradition of short, light commercial contemporary works as ephemeral as today's TV drama or news. Past Battle novels were as much a part of this "Contemporary Ephemeral Fiction" as other genres.<sup>74</sup> Their formulaic repetition was due to few people writing or reading the great novel any more, save old classics.<sup>75</sup> What distinguished the best Battle novels of the 1950s was that the ocean was made the centre and core of the tale. The fashion with later fiction, especially commercial rather than personal, was the ocean was just where the tale occurred. No-one could argue The Cruel Sea or HMS Ulysses were not totally bound with the sea they move in, as Monsarrat so rightly put it, the only villain. Even their imitators, like Moore's All of One Company, 1957, written about life aboard a *Kola Run* escort carrier, captured more of this than modern novels, many written by younger men who gained their Atlantic experience in other ways - by travel, reading, or listening to participants. Unlike nonfiction, this changed the fiction's focus: the ocean became the stage, in a way the ocean could not be mere backdrop in nonfiction. The weather and the sea were never absent.<sup>76</sup>

The Cruel Sea was instantly recognised and remained a classic. It was the only work given even passing notice by critics. Other writers of the war at sea and the Battle: (Forrester, MacLean, Mowatt, Shute) were ignored by analysts. Cruel Sea became a scholarly and academic curriculum favourite, as

<sup>72</sup> Raban, J, 1992, p.33, cited in Hadley 1995 op.cit., p.ix.

<sup>73</sup> Fussell 1989 op.cit p.181.

<sup>74</sup> Such as westerns, war, romance, Science-Fiction & Fantasy. Fussell 1989, op.cit p.239.

<sup>75</sup> Gore Vidal, in Gore Vidal's Gore Vidal, BBC-WGBH Boston, 1995, Part 2.

<sup>76</sup> When written by younger men, who never experienced wartime Arctic or Atlantic conditions.

the Dambusters and the best Great War fiction did. This enhanced sales and broadened popularity, as did instant sale of the film rights.<sup>77</sup> Like HMS Ulysses, it was based on wartime experiences, and in many ways was as effective, and as limited, as Monsarrat's wartime works.<sup>78</sup> When read straight afterwards, Cruel Sea appeared little developed, though greater length and fictional characters and scenes made it richer and deeper. To participants and their relatives it was soon *the* book, immune from criticism. A corvette of raw landsmen go to war, and their lives develop. The reality and myth of the escort Battle were established: too few escorts, not many U-Boats, but enough to be a worry, the fear and tension of escort, and the greater suffering the Merchant Navy underwent, even if they were rarely seen. Monsarrat's themes were bias against the public's waste and profiteering, women in the Royal Navy and at home.<sup>79</sup> Curiously, author Ewart Brooke noted in his 1953 minesweeping novel Proud Waters "This is the story of two ships and two men, minesweeping...and it is fiction." There was no mention of The Cruel Sea, or of the enemy.

The Cruel Sea provided the personal, psychological template for Battle novels, along with wartime cinema's In Which We Serve. Both had more or less the same set of women; all relatives or girls of the crew. The fears and uncertainties of the men for their wives and families, cities and country were shown. So too were the deaths. These served the plot: reinforcing the connection between land and sea, the worries and fears of this psychological novel, as well as those of the time. After a succession of convoys Liverpool was hit in the 'big week' of May 1941. Calder showed one limitation: Monsarrat's portrayal remained trapped in a myth of the home front. Calder only discussed Cruel Sea due to its small segment on the Blitz, and excluded all reference to the Battle, or its realities and myths. He considered messdecks mere transferred bombshelters. Even if Monsarrat did spend time in one during an air-raid, it is hardly grounds for assuming he was merely transferring the myth of the bombshelter direct to sea. Calder did not explore these myths further. The Atlantic myth was more than the exclusive, anti-

<sup>77</sup> Ramsden 1998 op.cit, p.38.

<sup>78</sup> Monsarrat's Corvette trilogy; HMS Marlborough Will Enter Harbour, etc.

<sup>79</sup> In Which was more sympathetic to civilians or women, than the postwar Cruel Sea: Calder, 1991, op.cit p.230.

American, anti-woman opposition to the Blitz myth that Calder propagated.<sup>80</sup> It was more inclusive, in that it had all nationalities and all services, but also in that it was primarily created by its participants, for their consumption, not by Government for the populace.

HMS Ulysses provided the unrelenting action template, excluding everything but the sea experience. Its plot can be seen in underdeveloped form in J.E Taylor's short, forgotten Northern Escort, 1945, which in a few ways - length, intensity, the number of events, and the ship's survival - was more representative. There was no captain-focus as in films, nor copious, unrelenting action. The action was still abundant, however.<sup>81</sup> A destroyer under air attack on the Kola Run was illustrated from the viewpoints of too many crewmen.<sup>82</sup> MacLean reduced these to a manageable number. These formed the basis of almost every set of characters in later novels: a lieutenant or two, a gun-crew, engine-room personnel.<sup>83</sup> The novel attempted to pack less in, and though lacking the character development or tragic progress of HMS Ulysses, still grips the reader. It was closer to the psychological focus of Cruel Sea. The worry of the characters was more prominent than the action.

MacLean's debut was an overnight success, an instant classic, permanently in print.<sup>84</sup> What HMS Ulysses had that Northern Escort - and most following novels - lacked was its 'inner reality', the sense that its situation happened (though nothing like it ever did), that its events were actual, its characters - "Socrates" Brookes, Stoker Riley, the Kapok Kid - were existing legends to be found in the pages of some wartime newspaper.<sup>85</sup> It was regaled the greatest sea saga of them all. It would be the instantly imitated template for Atlantic and Arctic action novels. It was heavily mythic, making

<sup>80</sup> Ibid p.165-6.

<sup>81</sup> Drawn from the experiences of the Polish ORP *Garland*, convoy PQ-16, May-June 1942: air attack, U-Boat attack, bomb hits, cases of cowardice and wounds, fires aboard, another air attack, another U-Boat contact, air attacks, fog.

<sup>82</sup> No less than 16, all met in sequence: signalmen, lookouts, gunnery engineering and navigation officers, A/A crews.

<sup>83</sup> Some have identical characters in HMS Ulysses: the usual rating with "12 years undetected crime." This also appeared in the sole postwar Canadian Atlantic novel, Garner's Storm Below, of 1949; Hadley et al 1996 op.cit p.47-8.

<sup>84</sup> Film rights to HMS Ulysses were sold but never developed. Details of the ongoing story of attempts can be found in Webster, J, Alistair MacLean: A Life, Chapmans, London, 1991, pp.73, 76-7, 236-243. David [Chariots of Fire] Puttnam in 1988 almost developed Ulysses, including having two screenplays written, but chose Memphis Belle instead. He agreed HMS Ulysses was a viable proposition, giving some indication of the success it might have had: ibid pp.241-3.

<sup>85</sup> The capitals in Kapok Kid alone seemed to connect both to wartime news, and to the Wild West.



central the weather, continuous attacks, and losses to a skilful unseen enemy. It also largely excluded the Merchant Navy such operations protected. In naval fiction shipping was absent though its defence was the theme. It had many factual elements. The ship's type did exist.<sup>86</sup> The mutiny which occurred aboard before the novel commenced also occurred. The brother of a colleague of the author was a crewmember of HMS *Swiftsure* in Scapa Flow, and was almost indicted for a murder despite his absence.<sup>87</sup> Whether MacLean knew of Northern Escort, can never be known. Perhaps it was so little known a decade after its publication that MacLean got away with it. HMS Ulysses now seems a little less a brilliant original novel and more a plagiarism filled out with more developed characters, scenes, tension and less realism<sup>88</sup>, in a more commercial format, in a time primed by fame of Atlantic Battle novels and movies. He later reused sections of descriptive text from one novel to another. MacLean was perhaps applying his own style, later to be reused, to an existing story which he extended, deepened and modified.<sup>89</sup> The possibility exists of more than recycling. This went on in wartime, and was mutually rewarding. It has later parallels.<sup>90</sup>

There was a pause in war movie production after 1945. With the war over, other topics and ideas were wanted: producers and consumers alike were sick of the subject.<sup>91</sup> The 1950s was the era of the great British War Movie, as Clive James put it in Fame In the 20<sup>TH</sup> Century, "now, ten years too late, came the flowering of the Great British War Hero, determined to make up for lost time and US dominance during and after the war".<sup>92</sup> It was also the era of the indifferent US war movie, though more were made 1960-70 than 1950-60. Germany, separated from the Allies culturally and iconographically, made two U-Boat films. Other war movies would still be made, but only one naval, more

<sup>86</sup> HMS*Royalist* command-ship; Raven, A & Roberts, J, British Cruisers of WW-II, Arms & Armour, London, 1980, pp.290-97, 438.

<sup>87</sup> D.Overton, pers.comm, 1995-8.

<sup>88</sup> The number of carriers, the size of the escort, the extremities of the damage, all compressed into one convoy. This is however typical of the compression of events and action which novels are forced to do.

<sup>89</sup> Biographies of MacLean point out the novel was written in 9 weeks, with little editing afterwards: that it was written for profit after a publisher's offer following the winning of a newspaper writing competition prize, and that MacLean never intended to write another novel. The explosive success of HMS Ulysses forced his hand and defined the rest of his life. Webster 1991 op.cit pp. 36-40, 44, 68-74, 75-81, 163, 234-5.

<sup>90</sup> See Ch.6; Reeman's Killing Ground, 1991, a poor combination of Cruel Sea and Das Boot.

<sup>91</sup> Manvell op.cit p.232; Frears 1994 op.cit.

<sup>92</sup> James, C, Fame In The 20<sup>TH</sup> Century, Penguin, London, 1990, p.143.

distinct, U-Boat film.<sup>93</sup> The classics were 1950's movies, as were the pair of German films before Das Boot. There have been only two others - one did not appear until 1999.<sup>94</sup>

As the Battle-related movies were confined (with two exceptions) to the immediate post-war era, they did not offer any deep insight into knowledge, perceptions or expectations of the Battle. They offered a limited view of expectations and assumptions of that first era. The movies were British, apart from two peripheral American, and three German works about the U-Boat. The latter were of a longer, deeper genre of men and submarines, not the Battle, in German naval tradition, history, memory and public awareness. Other European countries, Canada, and Brazil covered other areas and topics in their films, perhaps looking at war's meaning in film rather than the basic reminiscence/reenactment/entertainment of British or American productions. European popular cinema has tended to be dominated by American, as has South American.<sup>95</sup> War features being dominated by popular accounts, and European involvement in the Battle being small but entirely unheralded even in their own countries, there was no interest or productive 'space' to make any films about what their sailors or seamen had achieved. Even in Britain the Battle was a peripheral matter despite the success and popularity of naval combat films. With no 'space' in Britain for more than one 'real' movie about the Battle rather than combat, what chance smaller countries?

"The Golden Age of British Cinema" was between 1943 and 1949.<sup>96</sup> 1950-60 was the 'Golden Age of movies.'<sup>97</sup> This was partly a pause for reflection, equivalent to the few naval and Atlantic fictions published 1945-51. The times indicated the limits the wretched state of the British economy placed on movie-making. Epic action war films needed large amounts of sets, props, costume, and effects, as against thoughtful films, which could do more with script, acting and characters. Britain had failed to survive the war economically even while it had emerged triumphant emotionally and psychologically. Coupled with a

<sup>93</sup> Epic disasters (distinct from disaster epics) like The Battle of Britain, A Bridge Too Far and 1941.

<sup>94</sup> The peripheral novel-adaptation Murphy's War, 1971. The heavily-reworked actioner U-571 has now been released.

<sup>95</sup> Saunders, T, "Weimar, Hollywood & the Americanisation of German culture, 1917-33" PhD.Diss, University of Toronto, 1985, cited in Hadley op.cit pp.55 & 239.

<sup>96</sup> Frears, *ibid*.

<sup>97</sup> Or the 'Era of Bad Movies'.

strong desire to look forward and rebuild, the British film industry was more concerned with comedies and lighter material. No less than 55 wartime movies were re-released 1946-51, filling the hole otherwise created in this genre.<sup>98</sup> A convergence of economic limits and existing representation with box-office requirement was also a telling premonition. War films would always look, be, the same, again, for between 1946-52 they literally had been. The most clear characteristic of the movies, 1939-60, was low cinematic quality.<sup>99</sup> All were indifferently made, save one outstanding in content and viewpoint. They lacked the direction and clear motives given wartime works by focus on the war effort and propaganda, beyond 'commercial' action. There were now only audiences to entertain with familiar, reassuring material. British war film, and British film in general, shrank and changed after funding cuts in 1960, as tariffs on British content in cinemas were removed.<sup>100</sup> The present Britain was the dominant subject, with surprising results. Tiger Bay [1959] featured a Polish seaman on the run for murder, in a Welsh port where Welsh, English, Indians, West-Indians lived and worked together in relative harmony.<sup>101</sup> Their lack of segregation was taken as a norm, something unusual in 1950s film.

These films could not support Battle myths, for only one illustrated it. Most involved convoys and merchantmen. All were about escorting or attacking shipping, or pursuing commerce-raiders. They were not about seamen, or shipping itself. There was no Merchant Navy presence in these films, save survivors in Cruel Sea. Captain Dove in River Plate was used as an near-impartial spectator of the combat, not any examination or expose of Merchant Navy lives or experiences. In film and reality he came to know *Graf Spee's* Langsdorff well, if briefly, foreshadowing the relationship of the destroyer and U-Boat captains in Enemy Below. Films supported regular-navy myths (as against 'Hostilities-Only' Navy) myths about important incidents, and public impressions about what was exciting. On seamen, sailors, and airmen there was silence postwar, the myth of invisibility. Coastal Command suffered the worst exclusion of all save seamen, but Royal Air Force personnel at least

<sup>98</sup> Ramsden op.cit p.45.

<sup>99</sup> The meaning or depth of the script, the quality of the characters, the absence of cliché, the lack of dependence upon stereotyped events and plot-elements, the sophistication of shots, scenes, lighting.

<sup>100</sup> N.Pronay "PostBellum British Cinema", cited in Ramsden op.cit p.36.

<sup>101</sup> The murder committed by the Polish star was not due to his ethnicity, but due to jealousy and accident, something which crosses ethnic social and other barriers.

had squadron association support, and service pensions. 1940s and 1950s ethos's were very much on display.<sup>102</sup> What better place to show team spirit and sacrifice for the greater good (a Great War idea, surely?), explained by senior officers, never questioned by other ranks, than a ship's crew? Hollywood or Borehamwood never attempted to make Merchant Navy stories the general public could understand. Advancing in lines and ranks was for Great War movies, men falling to machine-gun fire at every beat of a drum. It was not the sea. These movies supported ideas of why and how the Allies had won. The sea had become neutral, not wartime's memory: grey-green, omnipresent, and cruel. Above all, they gave audiences what they wanted: uncomplicated action reworks of real events. There was no subversion comparable to the wartime Went The Day Well?<sup>103</sup>

Commercial pressure for excitement combined with readily available sources (both novels and popular histories), to produce a lengthy, unremarkable series of increasingly nostalgic, romanticised, unrealistic, unrepresentative but very popular and profitable movies. They were the top-grossing films in their year.<sup>104</sup> Though critics saw these film's limits technically and thematically, they garnered large audiences, growing more expensive as the taste and budget for epic adventure grew. Character and thematic development regressed to the wooden setpieces made after the Great War. All save Cruel Sea were "cliche-ridden" limited, repetitive, predictable pieces, as coolly received or criticised as middle and lowbrow fiction.<sup>105</sup> The "semi-documentary"<sup>106</sup> River Plate [1956] was already being seen nostalgically by audiences. 1960's Sink the Bismarck! was "incredibly old-fashioned, as if a 1940 flagwaver, not a 1960's drama."<sup>107</sup>

These films were made for a commercial market, and supported by the Royal Navy and government as they portrayed things these institutions wanted told and found acceptable. The Merchant Navy and its troubles were no longer a concern, requiring promotion, or encouragement. Films (art) and

<sup>102</sup> Ethos's such as sacrifice, team spirit, tolerance, working or fighting for freedom and a better future.

<sup>103</sup> Ramsden op.cit p.60.

<sup>104</sup> War films first or second every year 1955-60. Cruel Sea 1953, Dambusters 1955 + 4 others lower down, Reach For the Sky 1956, River Plate 1957, Kwai 58, Dunkirk 2nd, Bismarck! 1st 1960: ibid p.42.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid p.40.

<sup>106</sup> Halliwells 1997 op.cit p.57.

<sup>107</sup> Sight & Sound Winter 1956-7, Spring 1957 cited in Ramsden op.cit p.41.

movies (entertainment) echoing In Which We Serve, such as Gift Horse, the adaptation of Cruel Sea (1953), and purely Naval epics like Plate (1956) and Bismarck! (1960) served to promote the interests of powerful Government lobbies. Armed forces assistance and help were vital to all productions, as they had been for interwar recreations and wartime features.<sup>108</sup> All Naval movies glorified the defeat of the enemy, not the U-boat. Only Corvette K225 in wartime and Cruel Sea postwar described the peril, struggle and sacrifices made by small, underequipped and often pitifully few escorts.<sup>109</sup> Cruel Sea was a fictional adaptation, as was The Key, not a recreation of a famous event, and nor was it supported or endorsed by the Admiralty as much as other films had been or would be. A tight, psychological story focussing on the relationship of two officers offered much less in the way of recruiting enticement than general movies with lots of action, based on familiar, famous events seen from all ranks' perspective. All the Naval movies were depicting events which were directly or indirectly involved in the defence of shipping, though there were no movies or stories written from the point of view of merchant captains or seamen, or from the point of view of the Merchant Navy as a whole.<sup>110</sup> This was one key to their causes, development, and appearance. Germans were never employed as advisers.<sup>111</sup> Participants, including famous ones, were *de rigueur* for painstakingly recreating and synthesising famous events or examples.<sup>112</sup>

All British war films conformed to an "identikit" designated by Ken Gay: seniors stern, other ranks comic, stirring climax music with flag flying.<sup>113</sup> In general, James' comments held largely true. Class dominated narration, upper perspective illustrating the story with various lower ranks. The commander was a high, distant, stern figure to the rest of the crew,<sup>114</sup> using up most of the

<sup>108</sup> "Film clearly mattered for the armed forces.", *ibid* p.51.

<sup>109</sup> Except, conceivably, before its famous-event climax, Gift Horse.

<sup>110</sup> No such perspective existed to portray; even in the services it would exclude and marginalise some.

<sup>111</sup> Except Langsdorff's family, who were interviewed by Powell and Pressburger for River Plate: Ramsden *op.cit* p.50.

<sup>112</sup> Cameron for Waves, "Hooky" Bell and "Drunkie" Lewin for Plate, Esmond Knight for Bismarck!, most remarkably: a man blinded on the bridge of Prince of Wales by the guns of KM Prinz Eugen, playing himself in the same position 19 years later. Even Broome, of PQ-17 infamy, was an adviser to The Cruel Sea, as well as steering the corvette. So he should have been. Ramsden *op.cit* p.49-51.

<sup>113</sup> Though present in the 1937 MGM Mutiny on the Bounty: a US view of a wholly British event and descended Royal Navy traditions; Denning, 1992, p.351. Strangely, apart from writing and actors in 1984's The Bounty, there has never been a British Bounty movie, only 2 Australian [1917 and 1933] and 3 US [1937, 1962, and 1984].

<sup>114</sup> Something seemingly odd but close to reality: captains are (or ought to be) always respectfully distant.

allotted dialogue from the bridge, quarterdeck, or a stack of carley rafts, "addressing the chaps, man to man." Others were reduced to playing ciphers of themselves, infrequently replying to the skipper, usually in a strangled regional accent.<sup>115</sup> There were no 'lower-deck' naval movies. Crews spent their wars in dank, perpetually-moving messdecks, awash with broken equipment and spilt meals, or at action stations in tin boxes.<sup>116</sup> Movies or films set entirely in such locations were not exciting. Class prevented a movie solely from the lower deck perspective where everything could be seen: a rating on the bridge, a rating in the radar office, a rating in the engine room, which is partly what made, in many ways, both Monsarratt's wartime nonfiction<sup>117</sup> and his and especially MacLean's fiction so effective.

Postwar naval films resembled wartime works. They remained tied to the same storylines, themes, shots and set-pieces. Coward's 1942 In Which thematically and textually guided, then straight-jacketed, all later naval films. Above Us the Waves resembled We Dive at Dawn, Run Silent Run Deep did Close Quarters.<sup>118</sup> Beyond aspect ratio and representations of actual personnel, much of Dambusters resembled Target For Tonight, a 1941 docu-dramatic reconstruction of a bomber mission over Germany. The Sea Shall Not Have Them resembled For Those in Peril (about the Air-Sea Rescue Service), and in many ways even Cruel Sea resembled In Which's appearance, not plot, though this was as much due to author and Royal Navy traditions and routines as to screenwriter's limitations. This also made them ideal for TV, and this is the medium most remember them from.<sup>119</sup> TV made no distinction: wartime and postwar films alike are of an older, stolid past where everything becomes quaintly remembered through its cinema portrayal. Women had only minimal roles without real responsibility, as in Cruel Sea or Bismarck.<sup>120</sup> America was ignored.<sup>121</sup> Canadians were absent after Corvette K225.

<sup>115</sup> James, C, op.cit p.143.

<sup>116</sup> Of the sort that so distressed Richard Attenborough in Coward's In Which We Serve.

<sup>117</sup> HM Corvette, East Coast Corvette, HM Frigate/Corvette Command; Monsarratt commented admiringly on signalmen, who could see everything, and study their officers, p.218 of the 1-volume 1945 edition Three Corvettes.

<sup>118</sup> Above Us... would be recycled in 1967 as Submarine X-1, with a fictionalised story and a new cast: see Ch.4.

<sup>119</sup> They were black & white, no widescreen aspect ratio; hence ideal for TV. Ramsden op.cit p.37-8.

<sup>120</sup> Compared to wartime cinema roles, and actual service in WRNS and WAAF; Ramsden op.cit p.57.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid p.58. Though the real Ed Murrow was used as an introductory announcer in Bismarck!

Postwar movies replicated the tone and structure of Coward's In Which, if not his (Mountbatten's) emotional sensitivity.<sup>122</sup> Partly this is mere recreation, not clichéd movie-maker's inventions. Ships did operate repetitively, following rules and regulations. Captains did, infrequently 'clear lower deck' and address the entire ships' company. Even Cruel Sea has this, in vestigial form, otherwise noticeably devoid of the clichéd captain on a carley raft found in British movies of the time, military or otherwise.<sup>123</sup> Emotional sensitivity also played a part, from the clearly psychologically focussed screenplay of the novel of Cruel Sea to the more conventionally-stiff-upper-lip River Plate and Bismarck! The captain was always sensitive, emotionally movable, even quite feminine, without being effeminate. This was perhaps the most curious feature of wartime and postwar British cinema, the lack of distinctly American physical heroes.

An early "conventional popular seafaring war adventure" piece was 1952's Gift Horse.<sup>124</sup> Starring Trevor Howard and Richard Attenborough, a disgraced officer reluctantly took command of an old US destroyer [one of the infamous '4-stackers'] given to Britain. This film played the usual role in forming or diverting mythology: recreating the famous incident. It described the life of HMS *Campbeltown*.<sup>125</sup> Equally unrepresentative was Rank's 1955 Above Us the Waves.<sup>126</sup> Here as elsewhere there was 'meeting the chaps man to man', all he had served over before, in the Pinewood tradition. There was one Aussie, among fewer strangled Cockney accents. Even the crews who attack *Tirpitz* were so anonymous that each X-Craft has its number on a bulkhead. This did not stop you forgetting who was who. The 'VC Factor' was concentrated on, as in Reach for the Sky, Plate, Bismarck!, and Dambusters, which limited films and constrained the entire industry and audience.<sup>127</sup> One critic said "thankfully there are no stereotypes of wife, mother, sister, grieving

<sup>122</sup> James, C, op.cit p.115.

<sup>123</sup> See for instance the Sellers comedies of 1945-60, such as The Ladykillers and I'm All Right Jack, set in factories, etc, with 'leaders addressing the chaps...'.  
<sup>124</sup> US title Glory At Sea; 1h40min, B&W, British Lion/Molton; G.Pitcher; Halliwells 1997 op.cit p.296.

<sup>125</sup> Modified to resemble a German torpedo-boat, loaded with explosives, and used in 1942 to destroy the gates of St.Nazaire's drydock; the only one large enough to repair the battleship *Tirpitz*, denying her a refuge for future Atlantic sorties.

<sup>126</sup> Prod. William Macquitty for London Independent Productions, Mills, Gregson, Sinden. Screenwriter Robins Estridge, Dir. Ralph Thomas, Music Art Benjamin. Adviser Cdr.Donald Cameron VC RN, the senior surviving officer.

relative."<sup>128</sup> Genre resemblance and parallels between this postwar effort and wartime We Dive at Dawn could be easily drawn.

The Cruel Sea stood alone in content, subject, and indeed quality. Star Jack Hawkins was instantly aware it "was unlike any film I have made before or since. From the outset I had the feeling it would either be a complete flop or a very great success, but either way it would never be mediocre."<sup>129</sup> He only took Cruel Sea as it "wasn't an 'Errol Flynn taking Burma singlehanded' role" and "avoided Plate for the same reason."<sup>130</sup> Almost alone, it was not a reconstruction of a famous event. Within its limited script, character, plot, setting, props and effects, it was effective as well as realistic. If it didn't quite measure up to the box office successes of its followers, and it was very successful, it did create the profit and audience which made them possible. It was however, not copied or remade. More conventional topics would be.

It was one of the shining examples of 1950's British filmmaking, a triumph of the Ealing style, though less known than other, flashier, US efforts like Enemy Below. It also posited psychological stress and competition as the focus of the work, rather than sheer action, but the centrality of the sea and convoy experience, the rigours of life in the stormier North Atlantic, the unseen enemy, and the sea itself, made Cruel Sea by far the greater work. Civilians, women, the war on land - especially Liverpool - were never forgotten, for all they might not be what Coward had made of them.<sup>131</sup> A resemblance to In Which (where the entire life of HMS *Torin* [Kelly] was told in flashback) was the flashbacks to the men's key scenes, as they died after the corvette was sunk. The sea was usually excluded from the shot in order to make it as menacing and uncomfortable as possible, making it the rarely seen 'villain' Monsarrat intended.<sup>132</sup> The sea never had this quality in other features, the

<sup>127</sup> The 'VC' (Victoria Cross) factor, mentioned earlier, was/is the tendency to exclude or minimise portrayal of the general or common experience in favour of the famous incident or individual, the 'great man' theory of cinema portrayal.

<sup>128</sup> Ramsden op.cit p.57.

<sup>129</sup> Hawkins, Anything For A Quiet Life, Elm Tree Books, London, 1973, p.101.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. Oddly, almost all of the 9 pages in his 1973 autobiography dealing with Cruel Sea, cover the production team, especially adviser Jackie Broome, who conned the ship from out of shot. Hawkins's own experiences background his reminiscing about Broome's style and influence. One clearly wonders if this had to do with Broome's prominence in 1970-72 due to the Irving libel case, in addition to the respect Hawkins openly felt for the 'real' men of the Battle.

<sup>131</sup> Part of Calder's accusation of sexism in the novel was the killing of women. In the film Julie Hallam [played by Virginia McKenna], the "1st Lieutenant's Woman" was not killed and married him.

<sup>132</sup> Deighton, L, "Sand & Sea" in Sight & Sound, vol.5 no.1, Jan. 1995, p.33.



sunny blue South Atlantic in River Plate, or the greyer, rougher, but neutral inconsequential North Atlantic in Bismarck, unlike *actual* memories of the ocean. Even when war-winning technology, here ASDIC and radar, had to be the centre, it was old less-effective depthcharges rolled off the stern, not the later, far more effective ahead-thrown weapons, that sank U-Boats.<sup>133</sup> Cruel Sea's Battle lacked other ships helping hunt, and all mention of Coastal Command, with whom so much cooperation and cover occurred, and with whom so many U-Boats were destroyed.

Separate from recreations of combat was a more confused effort, The Key. Adapted from a long novel, this suffered from rearrangement to fit cinema's different constraints. The novel was "about tugboat captains passing between them the key to an apartment and the girl who goes with it."<sup>134</sup> The novel focussed on their lives in and out of the Battle. The film seemed more intent on exploring the apartment and the 'girl' as the men, perhaps a better fate for a script, but less good for Battle myth, or the confused state it left the cast and audience in. Despite Trevor Howard, William Holden and Sofia Loren, it still ended up a

"rather foolish symbolic melodrama which never makes its purpose clear, but along the way provides fragments of love story, chunks of the supernatural [?], and dollops of war action, rather languidly assembled with great technical competence but little real feeling. Talent occasionally shows through."<sup>135</sup>

Representation, as with Private Ryan, provided an unexpected 'reality': this was how the Battle looked to its participants: a confused jumble of danger and relief, sex and combat (against the elements or enemy), with no real meaning or sense; no clear, regular, settled, comprehensible tale. If this was the maker's intention it succeeded remarkably. The muddled story and lack of stereotype were not what audiences or critics were looking for, marring acceptance, not cinematography. Cruel Sea opened the gates to profitable naval action movies, not small-scale, thoughtful psyche-pieces without any glory, battles, or recruitment-enhancing spectacle.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>133</sup> I.e. Hedgehog and Squid. See the Technical Terms list following the contents for details. Even the second, advanced ship in Cruel Sea was portrayed using stern depthcharges, not Squid.

<sup>134</sup> Halliwell's 1997 op.cit p.407.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. 2h14m, b&w.

<sup>136</sup> Peacetime movies such as Sea Fury [1958] were based upon it, this involving feuding salvage tug captains off Spain.

Though a British novel, Enemy Below was largely based on separate classic incidents from US Navy official history.<sup>137</sup> It became remembered as a contest between two non-obsessional personalities (contrasting Moby Dick or Caine Mutiny, other classic American sea tales), not a US Navy Battle feature. It also became remembered for depicting the 'good German' (even if he was a submariner), a non-Nazi in the least-Nazi service, whose criticism of leaders and war prefigured Buchheim's commander in Das Boot. The U-boats preferred targets, shipping, were unseen and irrelevant.<sup>138</sup> He was not a recognisable German doing historical things. Good, realistic Atlantic cinema was defined by the weather: spoiled meals and spilled cocoa. In American movies, it was so mild the worst the men faced was a squall which prevented sleeping on deck in Equatorial heat. No-one ever even spilt a drink. The ocean was irrelevant as it wasn't in wartime or the best histories, novels, and movies. The Battle became irrelevant too. The story was fictional and highly improbable, convoys couldn't be further from the rationale, though the original novel involved a British destroyer further north.<sup>139</sup>

Rayner's novel deliberately explored what couldn't happen: plot and theme subjugating fact, plausibility, and experiences. It might be good fiction, in developing characters and the plot, but was as bad for Battle myths as British combat films. The basic idea, structure, and much of the dialogue were lifted to the movie, the captain continually second guessing his not too stereotypically rigid thinking German opponent. The whole situation though unlikely was based on fact. There was however no movie of USS *Kearney*, the first US escort to be fired on by a U-boat, nor USS *Reuben James*, the first US escort sunk, any more than there was a movie of "Vian's real, solid, successes" instead of Mountbatten's "famously glorious disasters".<sup>140</sup> Nor were any key US Navy antisubmarine successes of the last two years of the war filmed. Attention was elsewhere.

<sup>137</sup> Between USS *Borie* and two U-Boats; and USS *Buckley* and U-66; Hoyt, E, The U-Boat Wars, Arbor House, NY, 1984, p.268.

<sup>138</sup> Which would make him a less admirable adversary.

<sup>139</sup> Rayner also wrote a very good campaign history of the Battle of the Atlantic, a little earlier than Enemy Below.

<sup>140</sup> Howarth, "Vian" in Howarth op.cit, p.498. Ironically in Coward's In Which We Serve the captain reads a newspaper headline "400 saved from Hell Ship", Vian's 'very real success' releasing seamen held on the German supply-ship *Altmark*, in February 1940, when Mountbatten was ashore wishing for action.

The other US Atlantic movie was less conventional and more interesting. Paramount's 1960 production of deLaurentiis's Under Ten Flags, portrayed the life and death of a disguised German auxiliary cruiser menacing British shipping.<sup>141</sup> This resembled, or reassembled, in addition to reversing the plot of, wartime films.<sup>142</sup> It was also more interesting because it had "too many allegiances": balancing portrayal of its competing sides the way Enemy Below had.<sup>143</sup> Here audiences were invited to watch the struggle between US and German views, opponents now allies, them and us, without Enemy Below's relative skill. It was closer to Das Boot in how it made us take on the life of the other, defeated, enemy. Unlike the popular, successful and controversial Germany-first oriented Das Boot it was intended for US audiences. What they thought remains a mystery. Critics considered it muddled. Perhaps it attempted too much, or was already dated. Naval films not set in the Pacific had less chance of success and acceptance.<sup>144</sup> We also forget decades later these were commercial; made for the moment, not lasting success. Unlike quality drama, which can be endlessly restaged, reinterpreted and remade, released popular movies had a short life before video. In 1958 cinema still competed with TV, it had not yet accepted that TV would be film's eternal afterlife.

German cinema made two more U-Boat works, one on Prien, as the most relevant of U-Boat heroes: more recent than more famous Great War aces, and safely dead, unlike Kretschmer, Cremer, Topp.<sup>145</sup> Topp was reduced to historical adviser and mildly-enthusiastic supporter of filming the novel Sharks and Little Fish [1957]. For Topp this was one of many stages between participant and fully separate dissident countermythical thinker, finally able to come to terms with the past in 1991, when his autobiography was published, not without controversy.<sup>146</sup> Sharks and Little Fish uncritically laid out the participant's myth then and now. U-Boat men were solid, dutiful,

<sup>141</sup> 1h32; B&W; Halliwell's 1997 op.cit p.787.

<sup>142</sup> Such as Convoy, Merchant Seamen, Atlantic Convoy.

<sup>143</sup> Halliwell's 1997, op.cit, p.787.

<sup>144</sup> Manvell, op.cit p.309. It will be interesting to ascertain eventually which is more profitable, & which more remembered & admired: Saving Private Ryan or The Thin Red Line. The latter did not receive any Oscars.

<sup>145</sup> Hadley op.cit p.119-21.

<sup>146</sup> Topp, E, The Odyssey of a U-Boat Commander, Praeger, Westport, Conn, 1992, p.166; Hadley's discussion of Topp's countermythology pp.180-4, 193-4, is strangely muted compared to his earlier analysis.

dedicated sacrificial victims, obeying orders, neither heroes nor criminals. Hitler, not Dönitz, sent them to their deaths.<sup>147</sup> U-47, Kaleu Prien, the following year, was the opposite: critical, remythical, Left-wing. It was the antithesis both of participant myth and actual events. Here Prien changed from war hero to remorseful dissident, after twice meeting a thinly-veiled copy of Niemöller, and seeing the reality of Hitler's antisemitic ideology. Prien's Jewish relations [!] were killed; the Niemöller-clone incarcerated for his views. Prien was rescued by a ship when his U-Boat was sunk but another U-Boat sank the freighter, before being itself sunk. Nothing further from reality could be made, and this derided, controversial film, despite its appeal to opposition views, made no headway against mythology.<sup>148</sup>

War films "confirmed as well as explained why we won." Nostalgia for passed greatness was already visible in the 1950s: Britain felt a very tired nation.<sup>149</sup> Technical effectiveness (i.e British knowhow winning the war: the 'Bouncing Bomb' and radar), was not proved with Battle technologies.<sup>150</sup> Even radar got less than its due: Battle of Britain movies concentrated on the Spitfire, not the WAAF hunched over a scope, plotting table or radio without whom all fighter pilots were helpless. Despite the decline of literary tradition, and the rise to dominance of audiovisual media, cinema audiences didn't during the war or after demand more of their movies or makers.<sup>151</sup> They got what they wanted: a safe, if not always comfortable, limited representation of the war. The war became something on a poster, in a trailer, on the screen, with definite limits: beginning, ending, something the audience chose to see, unlike the real thing; something they went into and came out of. Perhaps moved or shocked, more often excited, enthralled or just entertained: but came out of: again, like the real thing. Limits, assurance, certainty: with factual, semi-documentary features they could even be sure which characters would

<sup>147</sup> Hadley op.cit pp.117-8.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid p.119-22.

<sup>149</sup> Ramsden op.cit p.59.

<sup>150</sup> Liberty ships, Escort carriers, Hedgehog, Squid or Leigh-Light.

<sup>151</sup> Cinema audiences vote with their wallets. They could have sanctioned against such poor movies, and indicated by low profits, what they wanted. Combat films were more successful than more artistic representations like The Key, so they were made instead. Audiences might have demanded more things like Cruel Sea, but instead supported Plate, Dambusters, and so forth. Who leads trends and who reacts to them is the complex obvious problem. Producers would say they follow, not determine, public opinion.

live, thus whom to feel for and be involved with, before they went in.<sup>152</sup> What was expected was known, like a modern horror movie. All the tricks and traits are used, in a certain way, to frighten very briefly under very contrived and controlled conditions. You are controlled and can control, the war you are experiencing, and you are not likely to be shocked, or disappointed, unless it is radically different from the norm, and then it is the departure, not the content, that causes disappointment. British commercial war film gave the public what they wanted to see, how they wanted, associated with war in very definite and reassuring ways.

These films did penetrate the national consciousness to some extent, though success was commercial, not critical or enduring.<sup>153</sup> Penetration was as ephemeral as any success in the pre-video and mass-TV age.<sup>154</sup> If Atlantic or naval movies did capture and profit from public attention, they were not remembered as fondly, permanently, as The Dambusters was, for all that the Goons' Cruel Sea parodies (1954) were known in their time. Several episodes also contained direct references to Victory at Sea, with its catchphrase "And Now...", to Dunkirk and the invasion fears of 1940-41.<sup>155</sup> One episode continued with a troop convoy to Algiers, and a mined ship sinking while "Bloodnok and Seagoon floundered in The Cruel Sea....forty days they drifted in an open boat."<sup>156</sup> These like many other representations, helped people remember the war in certain ways and not in others. In 1954 rationing had just ended, there were still vessels being sunk by drifting mines at sea, and bombs discovered regularly ashore. The war, if not the Battle, was still in, or on, everyone's mind. The public didn't reflect on the Battle, or *Bismarck*, however, quite the way Dambusters or Reach For the Sky made them reflect on the Dambuster's mission or the Battle of Britain, later, when memories became blended with cinematic portrayal via TV. Naval warfare movies were not realistic, and only connected to really famous events for ex-participants. Many more people had been through the Blitz, or could feel that they had.

<sup>152</sup> Manvell op.cit p.241.

<sup>153</sup> Penetration of the 'national consciousness' is defined by the number of people who had seen or were aware of such representations, and how many people are aware of them today, by comparison.

<sup>154</sup> Once films finished their run, they were largely forgotten, except by participants *et al.* There was no way for them to re-enter the public mind, until they were run on TV years later, and later made available on video.

<sup>155</sup> "The Dreaded Batter-Pudding Hurler of Bexhill-on-Sea", BBC radio, season 5 number 3, first broadcast 12-10-1954.

Penetration of culture depended on fame as well as representations. The Battle wasn't famous or eventful enough to lodge in the mind as effectively as more mainstream films, no matter how profitable or well-known Cruel Sea was. Reach for the Sky and Dambusters followed it and overtook its fame.

Wartime and postwar features removed or reduced almost totally the scope of documentary. About prominent events, postwar war features covered much the same territory as wartime documentary, leaving little the public was interested in. They often used a semi-documentary style as well as combat footage and perspectives, black and white stock, and the same aspect ratio. They also seemed to leave little for documentary makers to expose and expound, though there were thousands of stories needing telling. The British Merchant Navy's decline was an excellent subject, especially as the 1950s progressed, with the wholesale changes wrought by containerisation, automation, the growth of foreign shipping fleets and more importantly of shipbuilding, with consequent dramatic permanent and traumatic change for the Merchant Navy, its life, and that of ports and shipyards and the communities they had supported for decades or centuries.<sup>157</sup>

The Immediate Postwar Era had limited documentary representation of the Battle. In comparison to fiction and even popular history, the Battle was apparently little explored, and was covered early, mythically, from a US standpoint little changed from wartime propaganda. Perhaps no-one now could discover, whether there were other documentaries, without vast research into decades of TV programmes. TV companies have not had the time or money to conduct such research themselves, this is a task for future researchers in the countries involved.<sup>158</sup> There were no German documentaries before 1985, as far as Hadley, or the Cuxhaven U-Boat Archives could ascertain.<sup>159</sup>

1952 saw the 25-episode NBC series Victory at Sea. It was later regarded as a classic, perhaps because no-one, possibly excepting Sea War, attempted another. This was largely due to Graves' unrelenting, catch-

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Described at length in Lane, T, Grey Dawn Breaking, Manchester University Press, 1986.

<sup>158</sup> BBC email reply, 1998.

phrased narration of semi-propagandist wartime material, dramatic description of mythical content, and Rodger's memorable music. It arguably covered the subject reasonably for its times, using vast amounts of wartime footage, some authentic, to describe all the fighting, and most of the support and logistics. The Battle was illustrated in four episodes, its vital role underneath the other action in the West in seven. Necessarily and naturally, for a series fully supported endorsed and assisted by the US Navy, it had an American perspective. Most surprising was the series' beginning in 1939, not 1941, something few American representations would attempt later, although the Battle is a less partisan subject than much war writing. Perhaps authors feel the sea is common to all, which makes the perspectives less blinkered.

Episode one, the beginning of the war, pointed out the vital US contributions of shipping, and later escort, long before Pearl Harbor, as well as the shock and shift of perspective between peace and war, of being driven to this unpleasant duty. It illustrated the Atlantic Charter, Lend-Lease, the bending of neutrality laws, and Iceland's occupation. Shipbuilding and war construction were included, as were Allies: Canadians, British, Brazilians. Exactly *how* the U-Boat was beaten was lost. There was abundant footage of depthcharges being dropped, but nothing of the actual process of search, contact, chase, attack, or evidence of sinking. Episode three returned to the Battle, for the vital period of US belligerent neutrality, the coming of *Drumbeat's* mythologised slaughter on the US East Coast, remedied with convoys, training, and construction. Some things were out of context: December 1939's Battle of the River Plate was in Episode 10, South Atlantic. More of this episode dealt with classic ship actions and raider operations than long-range U-boats. Surface raiders were a threat, and tied down warships needed elsewhere, but U-Boats were the greater danger.

Episode 11, the Arctic, began with weather-watching and surveillance in Alaska. It dwelt almost as much on very limited commando operations off Norway and in the Aleutians as the Kola run, never mentioning US supplies via Vladivostok. It underplayed US escorts and freighters, focussing excessively

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<sup>159</sup> Hadley, op.cit, p.232-3.

on the surface threat and air raids.<sup>160</sup> It did not distinguish clearly between US and British shipping and supplies, Allied status after 1941, when or why the Arctic convoys began, nor the almost total British escort presence. Episode 15's D-Day illustrated US shipping, and shore bombardment in support of the landings, but not the extensive Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy anti-submarine operations. How U-boats were driven from the channel was not told.

Episode 16's mid-1943 climax was regrettably only the US Central Atlantic efforts, not the British escort and aircraft triumph further North. U-boat construction, propaganda, and Dönitz's leadership were noted, the growing ring of airbases - Bermuda, Newfoundland, Iceland, Britain and (out of context, too early) the Açores. The Black Gap remained. Unidentified Royal Air Force Biscay anti-submarine warfare patrols were shown. Strategic bombing of shipyards and railways, the keys to dispersed U-Boat construction, were detailed, as were US efforts, the escort carrier [without mentioning its British origin], training and deployment. The 10<sup>TH</sup> Fleet's overall US Navy anti-submarine warfare control was related. The rest of the episode described technologies - SONAR, radar, HF/DF - and their integration into escort-carrier-centred hunter-killer groups, by the operations of USS *Guadalcanal*, and capture of *U-505*. This at least, gave some indication of how anti-submarine warfare vessels and aircraft actually operated. The best-publicised incident thinly described the general victory over the U-Boat. General and American mythology were clearly and persuasively put. If nothing else they countered later American arguments about the lower significance of the Atlantic.

The Immediate Postwar Era was the era of definition and description. It laid out the causes, progress and conclusion of the Battle, setting out its myths and portrayals, depending on author and audience. Official histories kept clear of hyperbole and lurid description, but continued static modes of representation. Popular histories began the specific and all-encompassing coverage of the campaign which never lessened. The audience neither shrank nor grew significantly in size, diversity, or sophistication. Novelists produced

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<sup>160</sup> Footage shot during PQ-17, when there was a US naval presence?



almost all the classic texts of the genre, and many commercial successes. The classic novels endured, if not generally known beyond their audience. They did more to start and secure novelist's careers than evolve portrayal. Cinematic adaptation followed, continuing rather than developing another medium, in representation. Cinema used the Battle peripherally, largely in Britain, for profit, giving little in return. Documentary appeared in the new TV medium, but for all its good beginnings in scene-setting, was only a few episode's view of a very wide and complicated campaign, from a single service's standpoint. Victory at Sea's true impact was its permanence in the mind, the cultural penetration rarely paralleled later. The Battle was mundane and bypassed, as the world moved beyond remembrance. When change eventually came it would be distortion and diversion, not improvement. Chapter Four illustrates the years between repetitive activity and distorting change.

## HISTORY, FICTION, CINEMA AND DOCUMENTARY, 1960-74

"This is a novel, but not a work of fiction. The events recounted here were witnessed by the author."

Lothar-Günter Buchheim, Das Boot.

The end of cinema features and the steady release of novels and popular secondary histories separated the Immediate Postwar Era from the Intermediate Period. There was a great deal of social change during the 1960's, and it was in many ways like the 1980's, a forward-looking, optimistic decade.<sup>1</sup> Portrayal of the Battle evolved little after the 1950's. There were no more official histories, and fewer personal accounts. Secondary works emerged, limited by restrictions on source material, and technical books began a never-slackening stream. The era of classics was over, the concentration was on hoped-for success: another HMS Ulysses, another Cruel Sea. Cinema of the Battle was limited to a single peripheral story, adapted from a novel. The decline of British cinema meant there was less productive space for Second World War naval films, while America preferred the Pacific. Towards the end of this era infamous convoy PQ-17 became a cause celebre when straying professional historian David Irving, showing the topical divergence which would guide the rest of his career, published a controversial libel of many participants. He lost the case, while the interest, opinions and ideas generated by the book and its controversy took on a life of their own. The author can remember as a child ex-servicemen and seamen arguing heatedly at social gatherings about who was to blame how much and why. PQ-17 did not end the era: the case did not provoke a new round of works or responses.

Personal, biographical and general historical works emerged steadily after 1960, though not like the flood of stories following the war. These hardly changed in content or form before the middle of the 1970s. In many ways these types are still dominant, though they are more aware of their limitations. Save for a trickle dealing with the Arctic convoys, which could hardly ignore the merchantmen in their midst, or the easy topic of the slaughter of the ships of PQ-17, almost all narrated naval operations, and excluded the Merchant Navy and Royal Air Force. Early in the 1945-60 era there were a fair number of Merchant Navy works, though by journalists and writers, or senior Trade and company figures and captains, not seamen.<sup>2</sup> Technical histories began to

<sup>1</sup> Hobsbawm, 1995 op.cit, p.324-34 *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> See the bibliography for details.

appear. They were at first limited to technical data, not exhaustive presentations of equipment. They never attempted to examine the relationship of technology to the operating personnel. As small, thin, Observers-style volumes, they were eventually comprehensive, but initially intended to fit the overcoat pocket, in keeping with the publisher's format for such works, like a birdwatchers handbook.<sup>3</sup> There was no Battle-watching to be done, only a few museums to visit, and monuments and galleries to peruse.<sup>4</sup> Until the middle 1950s there were sad 'trots' of reserved or mothballed escorts in many ports, but these yielded to the scrapyard cutting-torch long before little books of details were written for the specialist.<sup>5</sup>

Fiction in the Intermediate Period was prolific and more interesting. Seamen began to write their own novels, previously the province of ex-servicemen, imagining things from within the Royal Navy. There were no classics save 1967's minor An Operational Necessity, until Das Boot ended the era as clearly as the 30-Year Rule and Ultra divided historical phases. German works still focussed on the U-Boat and remained separate from Allied, until the novel which ended the era: Das Boot; the first major German Battle fiction to be translated and noted beyond Germany. In keeping with the German focus, it was about the U-Boat, not the Battle, but it was a change from German mainstream work. There were no developments, only imitations and replicas. Contemporary topics overshadowed Second World War and Battle fiction in the 1960s and early 1970s. Television rose to dominate other media, and to be the leading edge of what experimentation and innovation there was in popular culture.

Cinema turned gradually away from war in the 1960s, though the US made more combat films than in the 1950s.<sup>6</sup> British war films, combat or other wise, declined as cinema evolved into new subjects with new directors. Only three dealt with the Battle in any form; British film never would again. In 1971

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<sup>3</sup> Observer's Guides, published by Warne, began with hobby-topics that could be observed: birds, flowers, aircraft, etc, before branching out into other technical and graphic subjects of minority interest.

<sup>4</sup> This was before the present era of conservation and 'heritage'; most wartime hardware and relics had simply been thrown away, replaced by 'new' modern things: Smith, P, Destroyer Leader: the story of HMS Faulknor, William Kimber, London, 1968, p.174.

<sup>5</sup> Ireland, op.cit p.133. Indeed the entire world had to be trawled for flightworthy Lancaster bombers for The Dambusters (1954) and for a Flower-class corvette for The Cruel Sea, 1953.

<sup>6</sup> 28 major films 1960-71: 12 UK, 18 US. Between 1952-60 UK: 38, US: 26; Manvell op.cit. p.310-21.

a British-American cooperative produced Murphy's War, a very peripheral story based on a novel with themes and plot very divorced from the Battle as classically received or otherwise. The innovation and experimentation mentioned did not apply to TV documentary about the Second World War in general or the Battle in particular. Innovation drove modern cinema and music, not the memory and exploration of past conflicts. In 1960 an unknown British maker transmitted Sea War.<sup>7</sup> As part of the excellent early 1970s series World At War, Thames TV made "Wolfpack": still the most effective single documentary on the Battle, though it ended with 1943, not 1945. It had the most perceptive interviews of participants, description and technology, if it still supported mythology: 'seamen were slaughtered', 'U-Boats few', 'escorts even fewer', 'the US left its lights on', 'it was a close run thing.' The mundanity and routine nature of much of the Battle was lost in a blaze of combat and statistics. Existing impressions were recapitulated.

General works such as Schofield's British Sea Power in the 20<sup>TH</sup> Century, 1967, attempted to analyse its decline. Warner's Great Sea Battles, 1968, merely illustrated famous events. Calvocoressi's massive Total War was a solid early attempt at general history. Much of Smith's 1996 viewpoint was from Calvocoressi.<sup>8</sup> The traumas of wartime British shipping were due to the interwar collapse of shipbuilding, protectionism, lack of shipping, losses, and dependence on imports, US shipbuilding, and weapons.<sup>9</sup> Almost alone of writers about sea-warfare Calvocoressi put conventional sea battles in their proper place: last, behind convoy actions and trade defence, behind shipping and the rationing situation.<sup>10</sup> He did not relate the climax of 1943, though he described earlier the problems of trade defence and anti-submarine warfare. The Arctic convoys were overemphasised compared to the Atlantic, though he avoided making PQ-17 the only example. Perhaps he was mindful of the contemporary legal case over Irving's work. The 1973 World At War chapter on the Atlantic began, "one reason Britain was not starved and forced to surrender was the extraordinary tenacity of seamen", presenting the very real, if not always

<sup>7</sup> Neither the BBC nor ITN found any details, though it was transmitted in mid-1960, cited in Irving, D, The Destruction of Convoy PQ-17, 2<sup>ND</sup> Edn, William Kimber, London, 1980, p.389; M.Lumsden, pers.comm, 19.12.98.

<sup>8</sup> Calvocoressi op.cit, pp.437-8.

<sup>9</sup> See Ch.6 "1989-99".

balanced, presentation of loss statistics.<sup>11</sup> This was followed by a heavily emotive, mythic account of a sinking and lifeboat voyage, before cold dry technical exposition of strategy, without any other experiences - escorts, U-Boats.<sup>12</sup>

The first secondary text (based on other books on the Battle), Woodrooffe's Battle of the Atlantic, 1965, attempted general campaign history without primary sources. He concentrated from the point of view of the escorts, on the usual basic famous events: *Spee*, the Fall of France, *Condors*, *Bismarck*, the 'slaughter' on the US Coast, key convoys SC-7/HX-79, HG-76, SC-94, SC-121, ending with the climactic convoy ONS-5 in the Atlantic. Included were Biscay offensives, excluded were Coastal Command and the Royal Canadian Navy - though it did mention 50% of escort forces were Canadian. This, due to an Royal Canadian Navy officer's help mentioned in the foreword, was almost the only reference in histories to the Royal Canadian Navy before the late 1970s, other than MacIntyre's "radical polemic".<sup>13</sup> Woodroffe was clear, concise, unsentimental, but hindsight-driven, collecting earlier misconceptions, as if this reflected the attitude of the time, undermining perceptions of the seriousness of the situation. The work ended with the climax of 1943, as did MacIntyre's 1961 Battle of the Atlantic, [due to space limitations in a serial volume], which was not the end of the campaign. Allen's Battle of the Atlantic, 1973, attempted the same coverage just before more primary sources were made available. Dupuy's Naval War in the West: The Raiders, 1964, concentrated on German regular and auxiliary warships for junior readers. The following year his Naval War in the West: the Wolfpacks, completed coverage, as part of a series dealing with the entire war at sea, on land and in the air.

Incidental history was now possible, with Seth's 1962 Fiercest Battle: ONS-5 illustrating the key convoy when the U-Boat was clearly routed. It was wholly mythical, concentrating on a single famous convoy. Much of the book

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<sup>10</sup> Significantly Grove & Ireland's Janes War at Sea: 1898-1997, [Harper-Collins, NY, 1997] is a more recent work operating on the same principles, but with updated perspectives.

<sup>11</sup> Arnold-Forster, M, The World At War, (Revised Edition), Methuen, London, 1989, p.85.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp.85-88.

<sup>13</sup> Other than Easton's excellent 1966 memoir 50 North. The Royal Canadian Navy turned its back on the vital unglamorous Battle in favour of more famous exploits, the poorer cousin of the other services, themselves overshadowed by the Royal Navy and US Navy. Milner, 1994 op.cit, p.259; see Ch.3: "1945-60", p.100 and Note 51.

consisted of attacks by or on U-Boats, and experiences on sinking ships. The rest was scene-setting and background to the convoy from both Wars.<sup>14</sup> Gretton's Convoy Escort Commander, 1964 and Crisis Convoy, 1974 (the latter pre-Ultra) were less mythic. They gave carefully restrained accounts from the senior officer's perspective. West's Lifeboat Number Seven, 1960 related now largely-silenced Merchant Navy survival tales from a famous liner sinking. Brown and Meehan's Scapa Flow, 1968, was another early oral history, of the great naval base in two world wars. As curious as Prien's 'fictionalised' ghostwritten autobiography<sup>15</sup>, Poolman, populist doyen of incidental books, finding himself unable to write a brief history of all Catapult-Aircraft Merchantships, in 1960 wrote a novel as a history, The Giant Killers.

"I imagined a typical pilot of the Merchant Shipping Fighter Unit, and I have tried to encompass and symbolise the whole story of the unit, their difficulties, dangers, fears...great courage and skill as a tribute to them."<sup>16</sup>

No more telling description of mythologisation could be wished for - by the author, not a critic or commentator. Poolman had to novelise in order to reduce the subject, to reimagine it for the reader. The work seemed a novel, but was still, in most senses a history, in that it described actual events. Here there were no named individuals, and nor much analysis, only narrative, which is where this 'history' fell down. Ironically he managed that history, The Catafights, in 1970.

The only change during the mid-1960s was the growth of technical histories, increasingly-comprehensive 'how it worked' books for adult males, who wanted to know (and be able to identify, like trainspotters) each tiny variation between one corvette and her sisters, between one model of Bofors and the next. These books often also contained much not written elsewhere, but rarely valuable analysis of systems, for all the fascinating detail and focus. They did not, for instance, analyse the interfaces between technologies and people, and their consequences for the Battle, nor for perceptions and perspectives on naval warfare. No shift in perception underlying the change to technological warfare from earlier forms, or from traditional surface fights to

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<sup>14</sup> Seth, R, Fiercest Battle: ONS-5, Norton, NY, 1962: Attacks pp.72, 84, 117-21, 96-8, 105, 108, 125-6, 133-5, 144-5, 148-55, 158-62, 165, 167-9, 170-85, 187-9; shipping sinkings pp.99-101, 126-32, 136-42, 145-7, 149-55, 165-4; SC-130's U-Boat sinkings 197-201; no ships lost.

<sup>15</sup> Prien, G, I Sank the Royal Oak, (1940) Grays Inn Press, London, 1954; in Ch.3: "1945-60" of this thesis.

<sup>16</sup> Poolman, K, The Giant Killers, William Kimber and Sons, London, 1960, preface, p.7.

anti-submarine warfare, was even hinted at. New types of presentation of sea warfare were not used either. "Early wartime reports were distinctly traditional, easily explained in familiar language. By 1943-4, anti-submarine warfare was hunting submerged targets with technical jargon, no longer nautical narrative, which kept historians away."<sup>17</sup> Technical histories were eventually available of every class of ship and aircraft, every type of weapon, individual vessels and weapons, from all sides; detailing every ship or U-boat loss, every U-boat sunk by the Royal Air Force during the campaign, when lost, by whom, and how, including many previously unpublished photographs.<sup>18</sup>

Why this genre (for the general reader, not the serious researcher, academic, or industry professional) became popular and profitable was never asked. The material was very gendered, aimed at the same male audiences that were interested cars and motorbikes. Youths and men were interested in description of technology compared to narrative of operations, but it is surprising how much of the market has been taken by such representations.<sup>19</sup> Cold-War politics led to an interest in nuclear weapons information, in addition to existing interests in technology.<sup>20</sup> These were bolstered by limited access to the latest secrets, and raised awareness (due to calls for arms limitation and disarmament), and the subsequent publication of comparative arsenals. With Second World War technologies and operations becoming declassified, there was a convergence of interest with availability, as there was previously with 1950's war stories and cinema.<sup>21</sup>

Technical histories thus abounded. Smith's Destroyer Leader: the story of HMS Faulknor, MacIntyre's Famous Fighting Ships, 1968<sup>22</sup>, and Hough's Fighting Ships, 1969, stood out, being as much narrative as technical description. Others remained merely details and data.<sup>23</sup> Preston and Raven's

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<sup>17</sup> Milner 1985 op.cit, pp.xiv-xv and 278-9.

<sup>18</sup> The introduction of new cheap offset reproduction technology from 1968 made greater photographic quality and diversity much more affordable.

<sup>19</sup> Their market dominance is indicated by the amount of shelving within subject areas taken up by technical volumes in bookshops, libraries, and in catalogues. Today almost all representations are either technical or personal accounts.

<sup>20</sup> Audio, domestic, automotive, then space race technology, information on all of which were freely available. Later, it would be computers.

<sup>21</sup> The "Now it can be told" phase of war memoirs and movies. Howard 1983, op.cit, p.30-31.

<sup>22</sup> Itself mythical: 75% of its ships were Second World War capital ships, the rest minor vessels from sailing-era actions.

<sup>23</sup> Manning's British Destroyer, 1961, March's British Destroyers, 1966, Landstrom's Ship, 1961, Archibald's Metal Fighting Ship in The Royal Navy 1860-1970, 1971, Thornton's Warships 1860-1970,

Flower Class Corvettes, 1973, rose above these, their content showed the technology through the story: showing, not telling. Sawyer and Mitchell's Liberty Ships, 1970 and Victory Ships and Tankers, 1974 began a long series of works of pure details, relating the design, construction and fates, without narrative, of these vessels. Mallmann Showell's U-boats Under the Swastika, 1973 was a German equivalent, though even it managed more than bare technical description. Brown's Carrier Operations In WW-II, 1974 limited itself to describing actions. There were now enough books and interest for Manwaring's A Bibliography of British Naval History, 1970 and Albion's Naval and Maritime History: An Annotated Bibliography, 1973. By comparison, McLachlan's Room 39: Naval Intelligence In Action 1939-45, 1968 related the operational experiences of the Admiralty's radio-intelligence unit, illustrating much material later works ignored in favour of the glamour of Ultra. More peripherally, Operational Research In WW2 [1947] was published unmodified in 1973, declassified, clearly intended to capitalise on the 1970's war book boom, even then only for the serious student of science, not the general public. Focussing on O.R. principles, myth was as absent as narrative. It left unspoken how much Coastal Command needed Operational Research to improve its effectiveness.

The first German technical history, Herzog's, limited by access to sources (still held in Britain) and as devoid of narrative and analysis as later Western works, appeared in 1959<sup>24</sup>, with more analytical work from 1966, as well as photo-essays, from Rössler and Rohwer, from 1966.<sup>25</sup> Gasaway's Grey Wolf, Grey Sea, 1972, was an aberration. She wrote an 'Allied' account from German sources of *U-124*. It had German myths of service and sacrifice, Merchant Navy myths of slaughter, and Royal Navy myths of overcoming operational and technical impotence. Also standing alone, Millington-Drake's Drama of the Graf Spee: A Documentary Anthology 1914-64, 1964, gave a whole history of the South Atlantic fights, from 1914's epic combat,<sup>26</sup> through 1939's battle to its filming in 1956. Southall's Seventeen Seconds, 1973,

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1973, Lenton's Warships of WW-II, 1964, German Submarines, 1965, German Surface Warships, 1966, Lenton and Colledge's Warships of WW-II, Parkes's British Battleships, Warrior to Vanguard, 1970, Taylor's German Warships of WW-II, 1969, Kurti's Battleships and Battlecruisers and Fitzsimmons's Warships of WW-II, 1973.

<sup>24</sup> Hadley 1995 op.cit 125.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid p.137.



reprinted early Coastal Command experiences, while Fly West, 1974, narrated Coastal Command myths effectively for children: long hours, mechanical troubles, the dangers from U-Boats and aircraft, the unending tension. Half of the myth was excluded, the contrast of life carousing and relaxing ashore, in comparison to operations.<sup>27</sup>

All arctic convoy books began with Hitler's attack on the USSR. From 1955's Ordeal Below Zero to Convoy! Action In Arctic Waters published in 1994, sweeping paragraphs related Hitler's promises being dust, and his legions rolling forward over an unsuspecting ally. This was a blindness to other interpretations, an enforcement of genre or formula.<sup>28</sup> Schofield's Russian Convoys, 1964 was a member of the same serial as MacIntyre's 1961 Battle. A sturdy, less mythic work than Kola Run, not a classic, nor as well written, it too was unable to answer questions about PQ-17.<sup>29</sup> Lund and Ludlam's PQ-17: Convoy to Hell: the Survivors Story, 1968, related, without accusation, mythical experiences, moving beyond narration into melodramatic horror. Their 1973 Night of the U-Boats, gave the same treatment to SC-7, the worst-hit of early Atlantic convoys. Mundanity was nowhere to be found, among unrelenting graphic tales of death and destruction. Later, more analytical books such as Irving's libellous (almost blasphemous) work on PQ-17 dealt with strategy, tactics, and the lack of escorts. Their themes were the mutual suspicion of the Allies, the political imperatives driving the Kola Run to its detriment, and the mismanagement of resources generally agreed to have been better sent through Iran or the Bering Strait. Other books vigorously defended the Kola Run, not only as the shortest, easiest route (like rounding the Horn to the Pacific...)<sup>30</sup> but also as the last great campaign of the Royal Navy, against difficult odds and to a sad lack of recognition.<sup>31</sup> All books of every era did not go beyond these topics.

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote 34 to Ch.2, "1914-45" of this thesis; on the 1914 Battle of the Falklands.

<sup>27</sup> Presumably regarded as not suitable for children.

<sup>28</sup> Such as that used in *Mills and Boon* romance novels, or *Star Trek* episodes.

<sup>29</sup> Despite mention by Roskill (*War At Sea* Vol II, 1957, op.cit), revelation about who was responsible for the scattering had to wait for the 30-Year Rule's access to documents, and Ultra's revelations.

<sup>30</sup> Kemp, P, Convoy! Drama In Arctic Waters, Arms and Armour, London, 1993, p.227.

<sup>31</sup> Those on Arctic service received no separate campaign medal, like bomber crews: Woodman, 1994 op.cit, p.459.

Broome's 1972 Convoy Is to Scatter ought to be seminal. It was a personal eye-witness account of PQ-17, not omniscient narrative.<sup>32</sup> It was also recognisably separate because it was the aftermath of a libel case surrounding the publication of Irving's 1968 history.<sup>33</sup> Broome made little mention of Irving's book or his interpretation. Most significant was the use of the actual signals as an undiluted primary source. These raw signals could be used technically. They could be separated, if required, from Broome's interpretation, itself even more separate from drier, more distant accounts such as Campbell and Macintyre, Schofield, or P. Smith. The signals' value and uniqueness was clear: there were many sides to the story, many stories about the event.<sup>34</sup> This was perhaps not yet counter-mythical, but distinctly new. No-one had presented the history of an event in this way before, as the jacket blurb said. More importantly, no-one did it afterwards. There was sadly no penetration of historical method, theory, or culture.<sup>35</sup> No new genre of raw signal based histories resulted from Broome's work.<sup>36</sup> Most interestingly, it was accomplished before the revelations about Ultra in 1974. The libel case meant the raw signals could be shown, after the 30-Year Rule.<sup>37</sup> Sea-battles and campaigns could not and cannot be represented so simply. Life and battles were not too complex, they merely happened in ways not easily reduced to signals exchanged. War movies are much the same; they do not show the whole battle, they recreate a smoky noisy large-scale commotion filmed from a distance, and then fill in close-up vignettes for narrative and dramatic point.

It is difficult to understand the furore over Irving's 1968 general history PQ-17. It actually blamed all involved for incompetence, not merely Broome; though enough for him to launch and win his libel action. Broome said he "had

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<sup>32</sup> For brief details of PQ-17, see footnote 57 to Ch.1, and Plate 2.2, of this thesis. PQ-17 had an Anglo-American 'Cruiser Covering Force' in addition to an even more 'Distant Heavy Covering Force' of battleships and an aircraft carrier. The German Naval High Command was worried about their ability to attack *Tirpitz* if she sortied to attack PQ-17, after a carrier-based airstrike on her during a sortie against PQ-12 in March 1942.

<sup>33</sup> See below.

<sup>34</sup> History was a varying set of stories about what happened; Charmley, J, Churchill's Grand Alliance, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1995, p.356.

<sup>35</sup> Almost all signals - 2 tons of them - were destroyed after 'first round' historians' and biographers' used them between 1950-63.

<sup>36</sup> Broome's 1973 second edition of Make Another Signal, followed on both from his autobiographical account of PQ-17, after the Irving case, and updated his humorous 1953 original volume with Cold-War era signals.

<sup>37</sup> The 30-Year Rule on releasing government documents came into effect by Act of Parliament in May 1967, replacing 50 years as the delay before they could be made public.

never been able to see anything controversial about PQ-17.”<sup>38</sup> Controversy surrounding the court case dominated the book, so much so that the 1980 expurgated edition received little attention. The events, rightly, dominated the representations.<sup>39</sup> The key libellous passages stated that Broome broke radio silence once he was sighted by a Luftwaffe reconnaissance aircraft. Due to slow communications between the Luftwaffe and the Kriegsmarine, the message reporting PQ-17’s course and composition reached the Kriegsmarine commander about 24 hours later, long after PQ-17 had been located by its radio signals.<sup>40</sup> Broome was not to know that, given the continual daylight and clear weather the convoy was steaming through. Irving stated Broome was unaware the cruisers had been ordered to withdraw.<sup>41</sup> This was patently false, as Broome knew the operational orders, which stated the cruiser covering force would withdraw at 25°East. Indeed that withdrawal was overdue by 24 hours when it occurred, as they had been ordered to remain with PQ-17 to await developments.<sup>42</sup>

For Irving the point of no return was Broome ordering his destroyers to join the cruisers “on his own initiative.”<sup>43</sup> Irving made it appear that Broome had abandoned the convoy. The actual point of no return was Pound’s order to scatter, badly worded and appearing to indicate action was imminent.<sup>44</sup> The situation appeared to be rapidly growing more serious.<sup>45</sup> Broome ordered the anti-submarine warfare escorts to proceed independently to Murmansk.<sup>46</sup> There was no point Broome taking his destroyers there, when the convoy

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<sup>38</sup> Broome, J, “I Am Willing and Ready to Go Back” in Winton, J, *Freedom’s Battle* V.1, Hutchinson, London, 1967, p.247.

<sup>39</sup> Though from the vociferous arguments at social gatherings of seamen, sailors, airmen and subsequent readers, the representations were driving many of the controversial interpretations of experiences; providing ammunition for the factions. Nor was the controversy a published one: seamen and sailors read and wrote largely to separate publications, their opinions rarely crossing.

<sup>40</sup> Irving, 1968 op.cit, p.55.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.305.

<sup>42</sup> 18:58 hours, 4 July 1942: SECRET; IMMEDIATE: From Admiralty to Cruiser Squadron 1: “Further information may be available shortly. Remain with convoy pending further instructions.”, cited in Broome Capt.J, *Convoy Is To Scatter*, William Kimber, London, 1972, p.156; also Woodman 1994, Kemp 1987, Campbell and Macintyre 1957.

<sup>43</sup> Irving 1968 op.cit p.306.

<sup>44</sup> 21:11 Hours, 4 July 1942: SECRET; MOST IMMEDIATE: From Admiralty to Cruiser Squadron 1: “Withdraw to westward at high speed”, cited in Broome 1973 op.cit, p.172.

<sup>45</sup> 21:23 Hours, 4 July 1942, SECRET; IMMEDIATE: From Admiralty To Escorts PQ-17, Cruiser Squadron 1: “Owing to threat from surface ships, convoy is to disperse and proceed to Russian ports.” cited in *ibid*, p.178, *then* 21:36 Hours, 4 July 1942: SECRET; MOST IMMEDIATE: From Admiralty to Escorts PQ-17: “Regarding my signal 21:23/4 July: CONVOY IS TO SCATTER.” cited in *ibid*, p.181-2.

<sup>46</sup> 22:20, 4 July 1942, From HMS *Keppel* to Escorts PQ-17 (pass to convoy), “Convoy to scatter and proceed to Russian ports. Escorts, negative destroyers, proceed independently to Archangel. Destroyers join me.”, cited in *ibid*, p.190.

heading for Archangel was scattering without any hope of regathering them. Broome formed his ships on Hamilton's cruisers, as destroyers (not anti-submarine warfare ships) would be useful in action against the German heavy units.

The issue here, as later with Buchheim, was less what the book said, more the reaction to it, and what that revealed of the times and memories. It qualified as blasphemy, not because of its content or interpretation, but because it dared attack all the men there, not just Broome. Blasphemy traditionally attacks the status quo and its dogma: deeply held beliefs and opinions. Irving opened a whole containershipfull of worms. It did not matter that he was wrong, or misusing his sources and skills. It did not matter that he was building a giant delusion about naval warfare and the Admiralty, as he did after with the Holocaust. Nor is it that Irving had no right or experience to judge these events and men by. The book is valuable in its blasphemy, and its interpretation. It is both regrettable and thankful that no 1990's raking over the coals of PQ-17, has appeared, that there has been no 'anniversary revision'. The DamBusters, far less controversial, received three. This subject could use three different and viciously vying versions of PQ-17.<sup>47</sup> The controversy may be largely worked out, though not totally, as Woodman found.<sup>48</sup> The overall stability of the history and personal interpretations and opinions, remains. Counter-mythology like Irving's was and is vital, for all that it may be poor history in terms of its conclusions. Conclusions could be disproven or countered. No attempt at change was worse.

German works were completely separate. They had other purposes, tones, and contents. Several serious works were written by Kurowski, who masqueraded, like many western popular authors, more profitably under a pseudonym.<sup>49</sup> The existing stream of unremarkable, heroic, nationalistic, operational, biographical and incidental books did not slacken. Preceding Buchheim's fictional and factual exaggerations, but with less effect, was US-

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<sup>47</sup> With at least one steeped in Political Correctness.

<sup>48</sup> Woodman, relative of a participant, who wrote an operational account: 1994 op.cit, note to footnotes on p.467-8.

<sup>49</sup> As Karl Alman, "Karl the German.": Hadley 1995 op.cit p.129.

dwelling Werner's memoirs, Iron Coffins.<sup>50</sup> It was roundly regarded as a great work worldwide for its stolid, unchanging representation of dutiful U-Boat youths. As Gannon pointed out, its purpose was political, "to protest that our lives were squandered on inadequate equipment and the unconscionable policies of U-Boat Headquarters."<sup>51</sup> It was roundly criticised as exaggeration and distortion by historians like Rohwer and western specialists. It was merely the latest in a long line of limited non-fiction popular works fully integrating U-Boat myth and legend: the political misuse of powerful machines and scared, weak youths. Discourse here was as stuck as elsewhere. Content, representation and marketing were all in a timewarp.<sup>52</sup> Iron Coffins is perhaps the anomaly between earlier phases of German writing and the later, 'Regret Publishing' era after Buchheim. It was inaccurate and exaggerated, but no more than many books by former Allied participants.<sup>53</sup>

Lane pointed out that participants always needed to over-dramatise, as if the memories and experiences themselves weren't dramatic or traumatic enough. They wanted to capture and hold their reader's attention, and more importantly, to leave the reader with the powerful impression the events had left on them. They had much myth and expectation to live up to. Iron Coffins was criticised from all points: exaggeration from outside Germany; misrepresentation of old U-Boat men; extolling warlike wartime virtues and ideas from the anti-military Left factions of public and critics. What set Werner apart was his ruthless self-promotion and publication, of book as literature and self as celebrity. This did not sit well with quiet former U-Boat men, any more than it sat well with others who disagreed with its content and attitude. It made the book, never filmed, nevertheless a huge success and its author a wealthy man. His preoccupation with gaining fame and wealth more than anything upset and disturbed all who felt their past, heritage, and traditions exploited and belittled.<sup>54</sup> This would come to a head after 1973, when a better book, a novel, would reap all sides of the debate, commercial, artistic, memorabilic,

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<sup>50</sup> Farcically by 1998 it was being advertised via the Net republished as a novel: at <http://www.u-boat.net/books/english>

<sup>51</sup> Werner, H, Iron Coffins, Holt Rinehart & Winston, NY, 1969, p.xix & 1995 interview, cited in Gannon, M, Black May: the Defeat of the German Wolfpacks, Harper-Collins, NY, 1998, p.453.

<sup>52</sup> Hadley 1995 op.cit p.166.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.130-33.

<sup>54</sup> Loc.cit.

commemorative, social and cultural, and begin an enduring controversy within and without Germany of fascinating contortions, indications and conclusions.

In fiction, themes and focus remained unchanged, though there was a slow but steady move toward more action and less thought and pondering. The action novel was far more frequent, and likely to be read, than serious rumination of war's meaning or power. The Kola Run was still a popular setting for novelists, given the continuing popularity of HMS Ulysses and All of One Company.<sup>55</sup> Merchant Navy novels were also popular, though rarely written by seamen. The Battle novel was settling into subgenres: Atlantic, Arctic, Royal Navy, Carriers, U-Boats, Merchant Navy. These were separated from the more character-based works of 1945-60. That era's fewer titles stood out more. These genres would be the only ones in future, almost nothing would fall outside their boundaries. There would not be any thematic departure, apart from Griffin, until 1973.

Battle fiction changed little until Ultra belatedly added a new topic; secret codes and the possibilities for refighting the Battle with the new methods this offered. Convoys being hunted piecemeal was a favourite device. It was good for raising tension and maintaining interest: who is next: when will the blow fall on our hero?<sup>56</sup> It had links to earlier, more popular fictive settings like the 'wild west' wagon train under siege, desert caravans beset by Tuareg, or wagons in a forest attacked by bandits. Unfortunately, such events in convoy warfare were as mythic as the losses and combats, and the mythologised historical slaughter they claimed to recreate. Royal Navy and seamen gunners shelling an attacking U-Boat was another favourite. Such things were very unlikely, even given the chance of a merchant ship sailing alone sighting one. Over three-quarters of ships sunk were independents, but as gun duels remained few, hitting or sinking a U-Boat was even less plausible. It could hardly have ever happened to novelists, but it was the kind of event they wanted to happen, remember, to believe in. Novels were the essence of what they remembered, long periods of tedium broken by brief violent incidents. Novels were also the antidote to their wartime sense of

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<sup>55</sup> There were 6 Kola Run novels 1945-60, 8 in 1960-74. Paris, 1990, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

powerlessness. Describing frenzied action and drama compensated for the inability to see, confront, and hit back at the enemy they had actually experienced.

Not until the Anniversary era grew closer was there a slow increase in overall numbers. This was combined with an industry-wide move toward serial novels with continuing characters. The 'secret-mission tacked onto Battle' type novel continued to be popular, though not as much as it would be once Ultra entered the fray. Callison's 1970 Flock of Ships was mythical, unrepresentative and peripheral, featuring codes and banknotes being delivered in a special small convoy hunted piecemeal. The seamen were strongly drawn, but unrepresentative. Increasingly weird goings-on were eventually seen as the works of a German agent in the crew, while action after action showed the same super-adaptability, stalwartness and strength wartime news and fiction overloaded ordinary seamen with.<sup>57</sup> The Germans were unseen but always one step ahead; mythically cruel when at last met. They killed captured seamen.<sup>58</sup>

Griffin's An Operational Necessity 1967, became a minor classic of the era, and also spurred some controversy, though not like Irving. It fictionalised the only known incident of U-Boat men massacring survivors, that of *U-852* sinking SS *Peleus*, and the lone survivor who eventually enabled the execution of the three senior officers for War Crimes. It became controversial in Germany, for a number of reasons. Like Robertson's 1956 Golden Horseshoe, it was one of the few outstanding works about the U-Boat and men, from either Germany or Allied nations. It was criticised for celebrating their 'unjust' executions, not their heroism. It did not even, in former U-Boat men's opinions, defend them for merely carrying out misinterpreted orders. They were the only U-Boat men executed for such a crime, and Dönitz was imprisoned, not executed, for his orders, misinterpreted or otherwise. U-Boat men were and are still bitter that a similar British case was never tried. Most of all, U-Boat men criticised that this story was written by a foreigner about 'their' men's story. Only former submariners, if not U-Boat men, could write about U-

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<sup>56</sup> Unadorned by secret missions, later another plot fashion.

<sup>57</sup> Lane 1990 op.cit p.63.

<sup>58</sup> So did the U-Boat crew in 1999's movie U-571.

Boat war properly.<sup>59</sup> This foreshadowed much of the abuse and derision directed at Buchheim a few years later. Griffin's book, after the interval of attention on Iron Coffins, became lost in the debate and furore over Das Boot and is scarcely remembered today. Significantly, because both Robertson's biography of Kretschmer and Griffin's novel were written by foreigners to Germany and its U-Boat iconography, they were also separate from the influences of its historiography and culture. Both fiction and biography stood out in quality as well as approach, without the nefarious force of decades of propaganda, reminiscence and bias.

What ended the Intermediate era in fiction was Buchheim's long Das Boot of 1973. Generally only seen translated and abridged, even more famous after inevitable television and cinematic versions, it was an anti-war work of some power and weight. Like the best other Battle fiction, it was still 'middlebrow'. As he pointed out, it was "a novel, but not a work of fiction."<sup>60</sup> drawn from his experiences as a war correspondent on the late 1941 cruise of *U-96*, during the first, almost strategic supremacy, of the Royal Navy. It skilfully blended factual events and experiences<sup>61</sup>, glaring errors<sup>62</sup>, and a derided, impossible, but plot-serving apocalyptic conclusion.<sup>63</sup> Much of what he saw was in the novel more or less as it happened. As borne out by his later nonfiction coffee-table photo-essays U-Boat War et al, the leaving of La Rochelle, meeting *U-572* in mid-Atlantic, the terror and horror of hours of depthcharging, and the usually empty sea, were real. The attempted penetration of the Straits of Gibraltar by *U-96* and the attack on her there were greatly exaggerated.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Topp 1992 op.cit p.166-8; Hadley 1995 op.cit, p.133.

<sup>60</sup> Buchheim, L-G, Das Boot, [Abridged, translated], William Kimber, London, 1974, Author's note.

<sup>61</sup> Such as boredom, the emptiness of the ocean, the nervousness and exultation of approaching and penetrating a convoy, and the shock of counterattack by escorts, as well as drunkenness, fear, and VD.

<sup>62</sup> Operating depths, and political dissent.

<sup>63</sup> Fighter aircraft sinking *U-96* and killing the crew while finally docking at home base La Rochelle, after escaping from their position trapped on the bottom off Gibraltar. This was drawn from later incidents i.e. *U-981*; Blair Vol.2 op.cit, pp.609. This kind of ending, killing almost all the characters, was vital to its anti-war stance. Their survival would not signal that war really was evil, dangerous, deadly, serious, repugnant.

<sup>64</sup> In reality it was not a fighter, but a radar-equipped Royal Navy Swordfish from Gibraltar, left after the sinking of the famous carrier *HMS Ark Royal*, which attacked *U-69* in the Straits, early in the morning of 1.12.41.



It was to change everything. It changed the expectations of all exposed to it, and the standard of what could be expected of war fiction, popular German fiction, and portrayals of the most idealised German ex-servicemen. Das Boot acted much as The Cruel Sea had 22 years before, but at the same time polarising and pushing out attitudes and ideas other than those supporting or attacking it. It was not a new type of novel, it broke no ground in style or approach, only in content. It exposed previously unspoken and unrevealed experiences, and regenerated mythology about the Battle. For this only, and largely in Germany, the novel and resultant film are controversial. Many old U-Boat men kept silent. Many of them were generally horrified by Buchheim's portrayal of them as sex-and-alcohol-obsessed adolescents led by genuinely thoughtful, good, anti-war anti-Nazi officers. Buchheim's fictional officers lacked not only a Prussian sense of duty and sacrifice but even much semblance of military discipline and soldiers' determination.<sup>65</sup>

Buchheim countered that his work was a novel, but not fiction: his photographs could substantiate practically every page.<sup>66</sup> What could not be substantiated in photographs were men's opinions: the Göring-taunting, Tipperary-Song playing captain, the loose, sloppy, slack ramblings about girls and beer from 'the Lords': the ordinary U-Boatmen. While the squalor, danger, fear, tension, drudgery, boredom of life on patrol could be seen, what men said could not. Young men and boys without women spent a good deal of their time thinking about sex.<sup>67</sup> It was less defensible that Nazi-trained, ex-merchant service U-Boat officers would criticise their leaders, especially Hitler, openly. They were raised in both the Kriegsmarine and merchant service's traditions of duty and service, and the ordinary German citizen's attitudes and expectations of country and society before self. These men would be very unlikely to act or speak as Buchheim portrayed them.<sup>68</sup> Men would be jokingly subversive, as 'Teddy' Suhren was, even pessimistic, but not treasonously defeatist.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Hadley 1995, op.cit p.143.

<sup>66</sup> Almost every page; ibid p.151.

<sup>67</sup> Kennedy 1974 op.cit pp.74, 136-7; Mulligan, T, Neither Sharks Nor Wolves, US Naval Institute, Annapolis MD, 1999, p.17.

<sup>68</sup> Indeed the German focus on duty to and sacrifice for country pervaded all works, not just the military.

<sup>69</sup> Hadley 1995 op.cit p.154. U-Boat commander Suhren asked once during docking on return "Are the Nazis still at the helm?!"

By 1973 Buchheim, former Second World War propaganda ministry photo-journalist, had spent the previous three decades reassessing his experiences, almost alone among U-Boat men. Das Boot remained the “finest piece of U-Boat literature”<sup>70</sup>, but it was still inaccurate, distorted, in comparison to his photos, for all his protestations.<sup>71</sup> He felt betrayed, used, made a pawn. He spent increasingly obsessed years after 1945 shifting blame from himself, German attitudes and aspirations, to Dönitz and Nazism. It was an indication of the book’s power that both Left and Right had opposing criticisms. U-Boat men increasingly jeered at his counter-traditional opinion, for illustrating and describing the war the way he had, and lastly for being apparently repentant for his service, while gaining as much publicity and prominence as possible.<sup>72</sup> Germany’s left criticised book and film for celebrating Nazism, though the film clearly criticises that leadership. Buchheim’s criticism of Dönitz was as unceasing as U-Boat men’s respect was almost unbroken and absolute. Very few regard ‘Onkel Karl’ as former RAF bomber crews regard ‘Butcher’ Harris.<sup>73</sup> Books other than, and indeed including, Buchheim, were in a timewarp, twisted in upon themselves. The German public were as undemanding as the British or American.

Buchheim became the ultimate exponent of Nazi-style propaganda, if the most vehement opponent of their politics and activities. Much of his opposition was due to resentment of their wasting his youth. His “unsubtle” messages, “pure debunking”, without “finesse”, were different.<sup>74</sup> Even his controversial dissidence was apolitical and amoral: failing to accept his own part in Nazism by explaining it as naïveté, instead of conventionally regarding it as orders. U-Boat literature is now most clearly separated into pre-and post Buchheim. This is not due to his literary ability, but only to the high profile of the continuing controversy. Since 1973 there have been films, mini-series, making of documentary, responses in books, public and associations,

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p.142.

<sup>71</sup> See the quotation at the head of this chapter.

<sup>72</sup> Being an *einzelfahrer*, “separate farer”, or independent sailer, in German parlance: Hadley 1995 op.cit p.163.

<sup>73</sup> RAF Crews called their 1942-5 Commander-in-Chief “Butcher”; Australian edition 60 Minutes, 1993; 55,500 were killed bombing Germany and killing more than 500,000 Germans. Bomber losses were the true heir of the mindless sausage-machine sacrifice of 1914-18’s trench-warfare.

<sup>74</sup> Hadley 1995 op.cit p.165.

disavowals, counter-revisional documentaries, more photo-essays.<sup>75</sup> Everyone in Germany, not merely participants (who must be very few in number, if only 11,000 survived the war) has contributed their portion to the debate. Their feelings and impressions are still strong, which is why this controversy has not ended. They are all still trying to support or attack orthodoxy and the power-groups involved. They are still disturbed by opponents who have different views, and want to portray different versions of their experience.

This period's exceptions to the 'Era of Bad Movies' were peripheral. They involved the Battle only by featuring dramatic operations outside convoy life. In 1962 a special operation featured in Mystery Submarine, where a U-Boat was captured and sent out, another unremarkable recreation of a celebrated incident.<sup>76</sup> By 1967 memories of famous operations were sufficiently dim to permit both We Dive At Dawn and Above Us the Waves to be retold more fictionally in Submarine X-1.<sup>77</sup> The 1971 film Murphy's War, was from a novel by Max Catto peripheral to the Battle. Starring Peter O'Toole, it was a different kind of anti-war film to Das Boot. It was heavily mythical, as only a novel by a former seaman could be. It featured seamen slaughtered by criminal U-Boat men, revenged by an independent, inventive, Irish seaman relentless in his pursuit. It predated Das Boot. There was little hint of the fear, worry and tension that U-Boat men actually felt. These U-Boat men were the war-weary but coldly efficient supermen of 1939-45. They were not the frightened weak slovenly adolescents of Buchheim's re-mythologisation, or the deluded stalwart victims of politics and machinery U-Boat men felt themselves to be. There were hints of this in Murphy's War, for it was set at VE-Day, when even U-Boat men in the Orinoco knew the war was lost and defeat only a matter of time. Once the ceasefire was heard the U-Boat men were only too ready to stop fighting. It was Murphy who could not. This was not a typical experience for any Battle participants, so it was even

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<sup>75</sup> See Ch.1, Plate 8, for a graphic representation of Hadley's chronology.

<sup>76</sup> *U-570* became HMS *Graph*; Halliwell's op.cit. 523. 1999's *U-571* has many similarities, as well as an Ultra focus.

<sup>77</sup> Men are trained [more dramatically] to attack a fictional German battleship; Halliwell's op.cit p.719. Recently there has been controversy over the American reworking of the British capture of *U-571*, into a pro-heroism, action movie.

more mythical than most. Even the killing of survivors was unique, though an apparent commonplace in memory.<sup>78</sup>

Documentary material was minimal but as classic as its 1950s predecessor. It was long enough after earlier works to allow change in perceptions, as well as relying on a more sophisticated audience. In 1960 the British series Sea War was transmitted. Details of this series are still scarce, other than one episode, on PQ-17, being scripted by Broome, according to Irving.<sup>79</sup> It was one of several British equivalents of Victory At Sea. No comprehensive sources for this era's general television, apart from popular collections of memories of the very best drama and game-shows, are available.<sup>80</sup> Its use of and place in mythology therefore remains obscure. It is hardly possible it was revolutionary and ground breaking. It would have been better remembered. It cannot have been so radical it was forgotten or buried. It could be concluded it was ordinary, and perhaps less exciting than Victory. It could have been a more thorough, or less propagandised and official account. It could hardly have been less mythic. There has never been any indication that a Battle documentary has gone against the expectations of the period.

Thames TV in 1973 produced World At War, which contained the episode "Wolfpack: U-Boats in the Atlantic 1939-43." In many ways this remained the single best documentary on the Battle. It was mythological, and it had a diverting gaze from typical experiences to combat and excitement.<sup>81</sup> It hardly suffered from a lack of Ultra, managing, as Roskill had, to show its consequences without revealing it. It was unique among Battle documentaries in its great coverage, depth, and proper and careful representation of all sides (Royal Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, US Navy, Coastguard, Kriegsmarine, Luftwaffe, RAF, and Merchant Navy) and key elements (men, ships, tonnage war, technological race, tactics and strategy). It was perfectly placed to benefit from new writings based on primary sources, and a mature three decades of

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<sup>78</sup> See Lane 1990 op.cit, pp.240-1, 257, for analysis of alleged German cruelty. It had also already been the subject of Griffin's celebrated and controversial 1967 novel, the closest the Battle ever came to demythologisation in fiction.

<sup>79</sup> TV Times, Summer 1960, cited in Irving 1968 op.cit, p.313.

<sup>80</sup> I.e Forty Years of British TV, 1995.

<sup>81</sup> It had the same type of touching music and catching narration as Victory at Sea.

perspective. It was also perfectly placed to exploit the memories of ageing but alert men. Not until Dönitz: the Successor (which has many failings, not least the exploitation of its interviewees) in 1994 would there again be so many key people in one Battle documentary.<sup>82</sup>

Despite its magnificent concentration on the Battle, especially its normally neglected early stages, "Wolfpack" still narrated famous incidents: SC-7, HG-76, ONS-5; concentrated on offence not defence, even though it importantly showed convoy to be an offensive, not defensive strategy. It failed to illustrate the boredom and worry of Battle life: of convoys not attacked, U-Boat operations which never sighted convoys, escorts, or aircraft. "Wolfpack"s only other defect was its conclusion in mid-1943, when the "Atlantic lifeline was at last secure."<sup>83</sup> It confined itself to illustrating how the Battle was limiting Allied advance. The Battle had to be won for the war to be decided: thus the Battle's story appeared to be over once supremacy was achieved. Reality was different. The fighting did not stop: the killing was just more German than Allied.<sup>84</sup> Allied strategic victory in 1941 and tactical supremacy from 1943 were its centre.

The Intermediate Period was a time of little change. It was also a period when continuity and the force of experiences continued to be effectively transmitted to audiences in diverging representations. The period between 1945 and 1974 is too large to be studied whole, containing much change elsewhere to be regarded as a single era, devoid of socio-cultural pressures. New representations appeared, but revealed relatively little compared to the scene-setting and perception-forming between 1945-1960. Non-mythical works remained less popular than fully mythical ones. Counter-mythology was impossible without new sources. Fiction continued to sell steadily, but unlike

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<sup>82</sup> Gilbert Roberts, (head of WAC's tactical school), escort captains Gretton, Sherwood and Hart: all illustrating the same vital convoy battle; Oulton of Coastal Command [killer of three U-Boats in May 1943] in a very even-handed display of inter-Bomber/Coastal Command problems; an unfortunate concentration of white British Merchant Navy masters and officers instead of seamen, though there are Royal Navy ratings; lastly, Dönitz and three of his ablest U-Boat commanders: Hartwig-Looks, Cremer, and the Second World War tonnage king (world ace), president of the World Submariners Society until his death, 'Silent Otto' Kretschmer, 1918-98.

<sup>83</sup> In Sir Laurence Olivier's narration.

<sup>84</sup> Milner describes it well: on 5.5.45, the day BdU [U-Boat Command] ceased operating, there were 25 U-Boats in British waters tying down 400 anti-submarine warfare vessels and no less than 800 aircraft. The threat, if not the risk, remained very real. Milner 1994 op.cit, p.255.

1950s bestsellers, only within its core audience.<sup>85</sup> The emergence and steady growth in popularity and quality of technical histories boded well for future researchers. British cinema diverged, new forms were the fashion in place of stolid portrayal of wartime ideas or values. Cinema portrayal of the Battle reached its nadir in 1960, with stiff presentations of famous events perhaps little recalled or valued by the British public. In America different ideas, which might perhaps influence later generations, failed to make a mark, due to poor execution and the limitations of war cinema. Television significantly promised an eternal afterlife for both documentary and cinema.

The passage of time also had effects. Memory of the war developed into a quiet, comfortable reminiscence, unwilling to change, and rarely stimulated. Distortions could creep in, and the audience remained undemanding. The war could now be parodied and twisted, with effects on participant and subsequent audiences. The Battle's authors, without new official portrayals and recognition, lacked the impetus to develop representations. They were presenting their memories as they saw fit. There had been few new sources to attract and stimulate the academic. Those available did not reveal anything starkly surprising or reinvigorating. There were only wartime controversies. When reawakened, one of these caused a victory for the forces of order and myth as well as justice. It was not counter-myth in any case, it was an attempt, like Buchheim, at re-myth. It was to be the last of its kind. Scholarly debate remained stymied, and popular debate was limited by myth and sanction. All was about to change. New sources were steadily released in the last years of the period, and a revolutionary, re-mythical novel appeared at the same time. They would also not change greatly for another generation. Diversion and distortion were on the horizon, not rebirth or maturation. Myths would be added to, not explored, or replaced.

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<sup>85</sup> Cruel Sea and HMS Ulysses had broad appeal, as their popularity, sales, and inclusion in school syllabi indicated; Ramsden, op.cit p.38; later Battle novels (bar Das Boot), never did.

## HISTORY, DOCUMENTARY, CINEMA AND FICTION, 1974-89

"Be pleased to inform her Majesty that the White Ensign flies alongside the Union Flag on South Georgia. God Save the Queen."

--Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward's Draco-Nelsonian signal to 10 Downing St, Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April 1982.

"Failure? The possibility doesn't exist."

P.M. Thatcher's conscious evocation of Churchillian defiance, April 1982.

The release of wartime materials held under the 30-Year Rule ended the Intermediate Period. New information on British and German policy and errors, classified cryptography and technology fed a new anniversarialism. These new sources and a disillusionment with the ideology and attitudes of the 1960's supported a general interest in past achievements and events. Britain's continuing decline as a political and economic power, and an integration with a Europe it had helped to save, fostered an inward and backward view.<sup>1</sup> It was easier to hark back to old glories, and revel in the British tradition of fighting against impossibly long odds (or so the socially constructed mythology would have us think).<sup>2</sup> It was convenient and reassuring to extrapolate the Dunkirk Spirit created during the invasion crisis of 1940 forward or backward to any conceivable event.<sup>3</sup> Canada's Battle remained in its long drought, America was preoccupied with Vietnam and Watergate, other nations with their own problems. Germany concentrated on its continuing economic miracle. Former participants focussed on the effervescing Buchheim affair. What did change was the origin of the drive behind representations. The new era was as much driven by commercial and professional interest as actual experience. A significant part of the Ultra-era material was written by non-participants, who did not have memory of the events infusing their work. This type of work was instead founded on primary and secondary documents, at once drier and more staid, and also more mythic and emotive, depending on the source.

The second half of the 1970s was revolutionary in some ways but not others. For popular and academic history, the release of British diplomatic and military sources meant a vast new field of primary materials about all facets of the campaign. This was followed by the only revolution: Ultra. The availability of primary materials ought to have changed the outlook and appearance of

<sup>1</sup> Hobsbawm, op.cit p.228.

<sup>2</sup> The British have probably won as many battles by luck or by opponent's incompetence as anyone, and have often won or negotiated from a position of considerable economic and naval strength. Tute, W, The True Glory, Macdonald, London, 1983, p.34.

<sup>3</sup> Its most potent demonstration was the Falklands war, in the conscious adoption of Churchillian myth and phraseology by media, government, and public alike. See Barnett's Iron Britannia: the Falklands War & British National Opinion, Allison & Busby, London, 1982, for details.

Battle history. Certainly some 'myths' were laid to rest, and much factual discrepancy and error removed. Much, especially dealing with shipping and personnel losses, remained. It also enabled technical and specialist weapon and incident histories based on previously secret data to grow further. As with other types of history, and other technical works, this material took time to become comprehensive, sophisticated, and to rely as much on photographs and graphics as text.

Ultra had a more dramatic impact, if less useful in the long run. Instead of merely being incorporated as an important but minor factor, it tended to become the focus of the Battle. This distorted representation of the campaign, and created new myths.<sup>4</sup> Merchant Navy stories were slightly enhanced by the prominence of shipping service and losses in the 1982 Falklands war. Old ideas about tonnage war and the Battle's criticality, largely disproved after the war in gazettes and official publications, were still as current as 'all seamen were overpaid', or 'their horrendous losses'. Coastal Command was still largely excluded, though technical works and secondary histories began to appear. Released sources at least meant previously routine but unavailable materials were accessible.

The 1973 German novel Das Boot, translated into English the following year, changed the thematic and commercial direction of fiction. It became, like Cruel Sea and HMS Ulysses before it, an instant classic, and practically the only controversial fiction of the Battle.<sup>5</sup> It was never the subject of a court case, as was Irving's PQ-17, but having polarised debate in Germany, dominated other issues. The controversies over Das Boot were separate. Outside Germany there was slight debate over whether Buchheim was a Nazi apologist by excluding Nazism rather than not openly portraying its evils. There was also debate over the taste of a novel which ought to be condemning U-Boat men, not supporting and celebrating them, even if not celebrating sinkings. For Buchheim to condemn his characters would be like a British author condemning a successful anti-submarine warfare captain: unrealistic,

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<sup>4</sup> Post-Ultra Battle history mirrored what had always been considered of Second World War Pacific history: we had their codes all along, and were able to anticipate their moves, which was how we won. None of which explains Pearl Harbor.

<sup>5</sup> After Griffin's 1967 An Operational Necessity.



unnecessary and unwanted. For Atlantic cinema, the rush of new sources and then the revelation of Ultra did nothing, while the inevitable filming of Das Boot, contributed the last Battle film (and later TV mini-series) of only two after 1960, and a new dimension to Germany's debate. National perspectives were as separate in 1973, or 1985, as ever.

Documentary was slightly more active, though not in new forms. It moved away from the infrequent general coverage of 1952-72 to more typical territory: the particular and disregarded. Technology was the focus of one documentary per decade. The 1978 Battle of the Atlantic production covered the challenge and response of weapons and sensors for the first time. It brought Ultra to television, but nothing integrated this with earlier general material. Only the imaginative viewer and the academic could benefit. It has been rarely mentioned since.<sup>6</sup> Even where TV documentary tried to take objective, scholarly account, as did the German Against England (1987), promotional material undermined it. This accidentally lessened and diverted controversy.<sup>7</sup> German documentaries have been as pro-Allied as official works in the deNazification era 1945-52, or as supportive of Left or Right Wing myth and position as other media. The Left was pacifist and critical of all military service, the right traditionally supported military service, sacrifice, and duty.

A cross-media mythical element prominent in the revisionist and republishing era after 1974 was the nature and use of cover art.<sup>8</sup> It was mainly a marketing phenomenon, not only of new novels, but more so the reissue and republishing of old. The distinction between academic and popular history may have been blurred in writing. There was no distinction between popular history and fiction artwork and marketing.<sup>9</sup> Most covers used the same, usually unrealistic, elements: Fw-200s diving on helpless ships, or surfaced U-Boats shooting it out with destroyers. These were not corvettes or frigates, converted trawlers, or even clearly-modified older destroyers; but the modern, gun-heavy fleet destroyers rare in Atlantic anti-submarine warfare. The

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<sup>6</sup> Never used by academics; Sgt. Luker, RCAF, in Bowyer, 1979 op.cit p.80.

<sup>7</sup> The promotions presented only the usual, mythic, 'U-Boat men as heroes' angle, not what the documentary actually said. As a result the countermythic stance of the documentary, which could have attracted odium, was hidden.

<sup>8</sup> For detailed examples, see the attached plates 5.1 - 5.15.

<sup>9</sup> This blurring was distinct from Poolman's fictionalised CAMShip history The Giant Killers.



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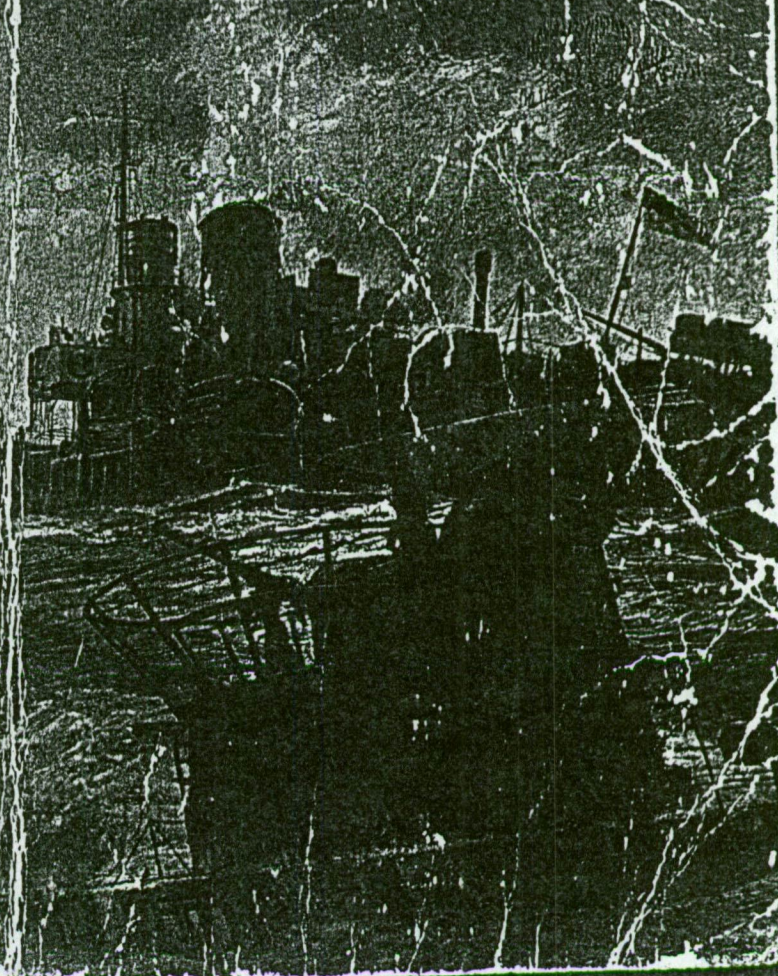
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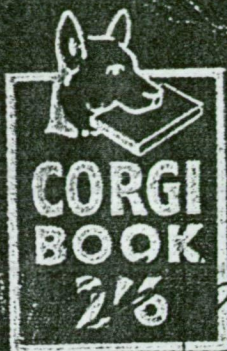


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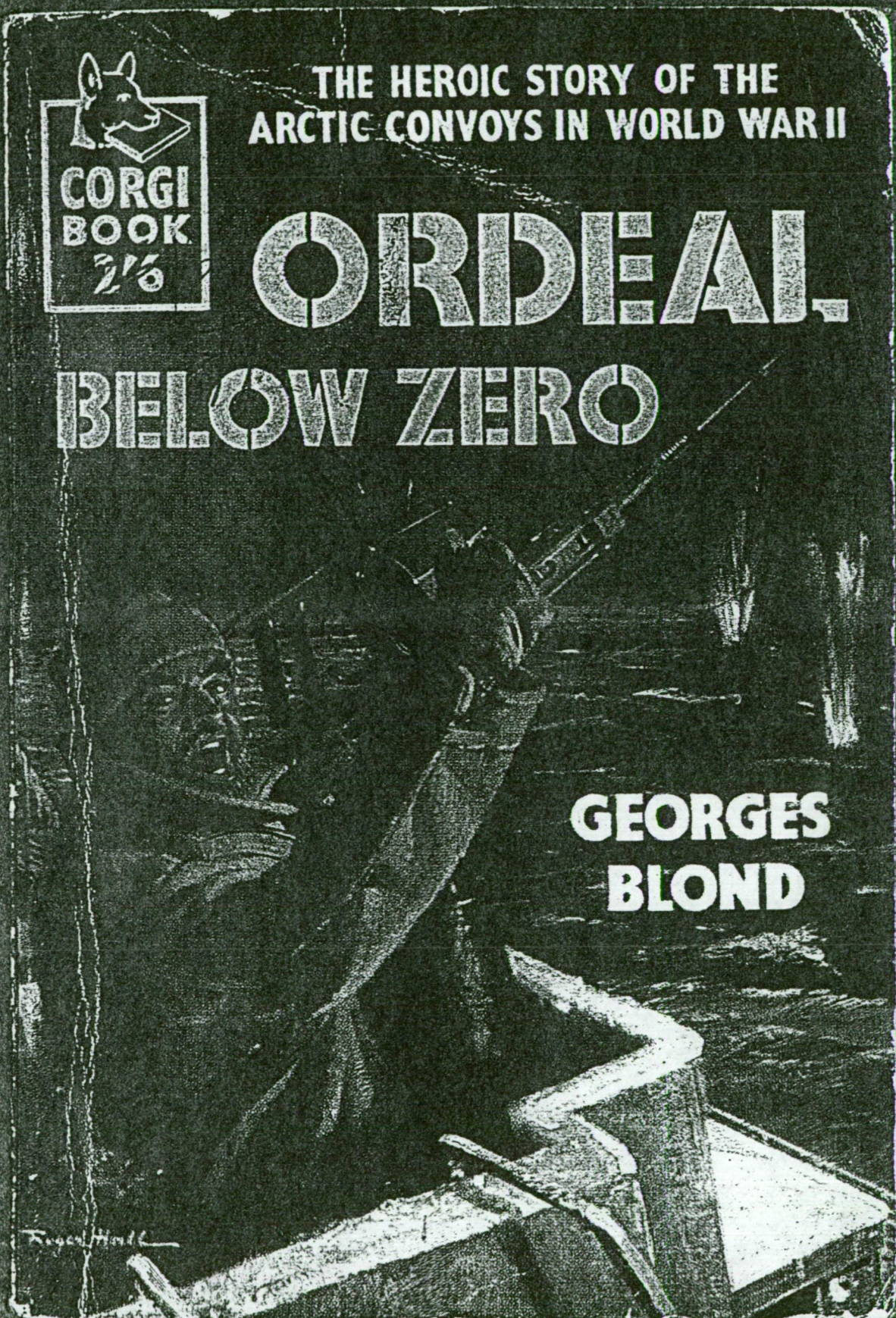




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sea and air, and knew that certain death  
lay in the icy waters beneath

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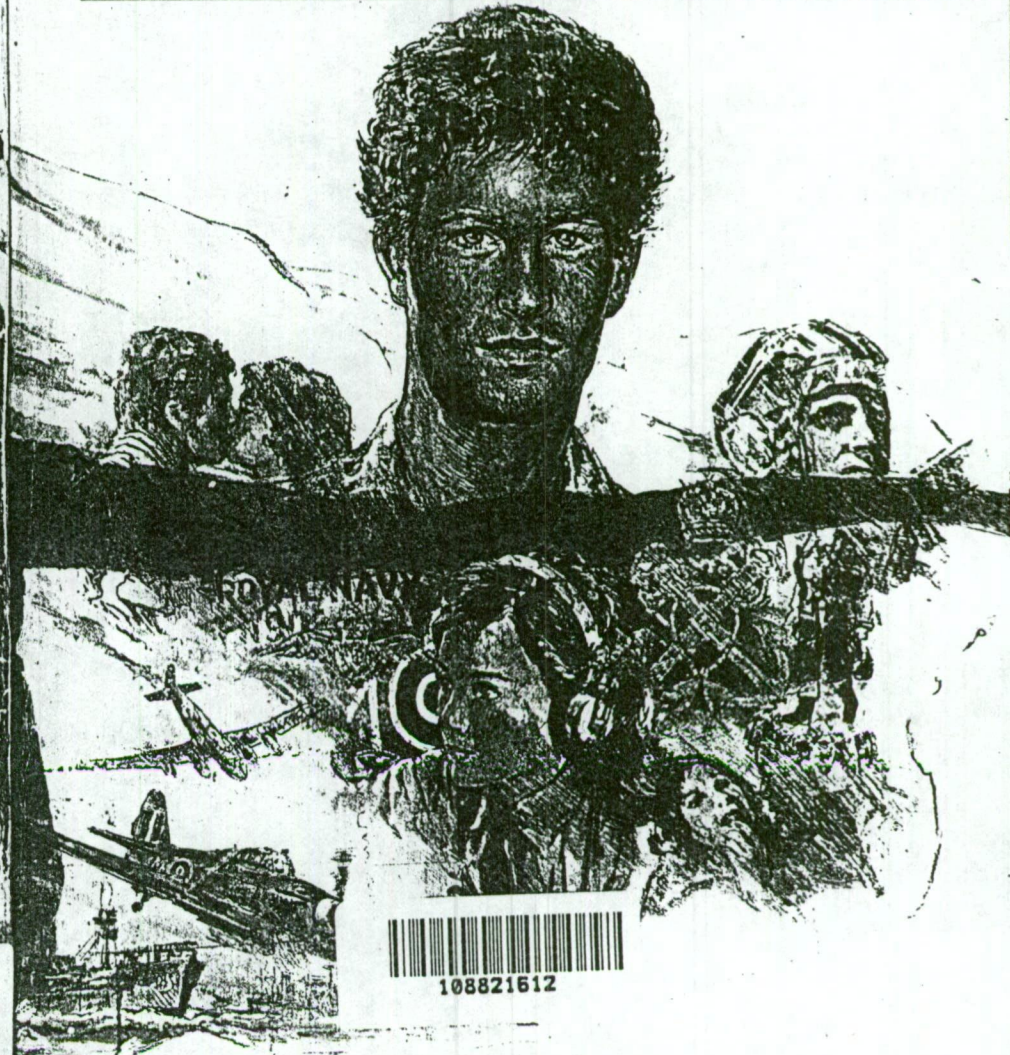
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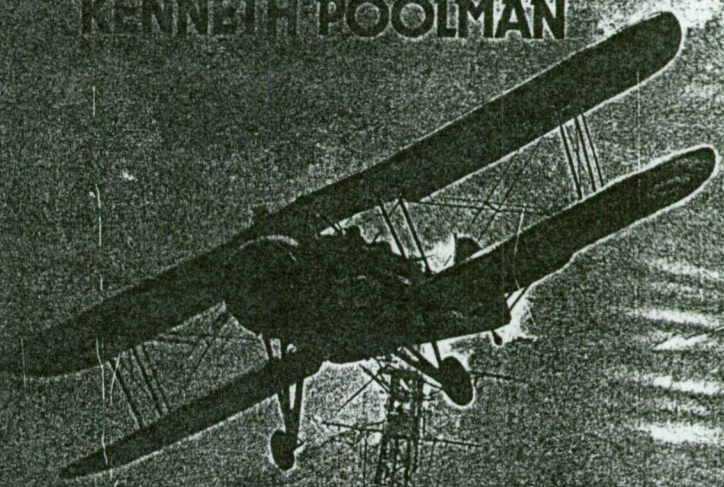
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Poolman's 1983 technical history.  
Note the fictional graphic style, despite the serious technical content.

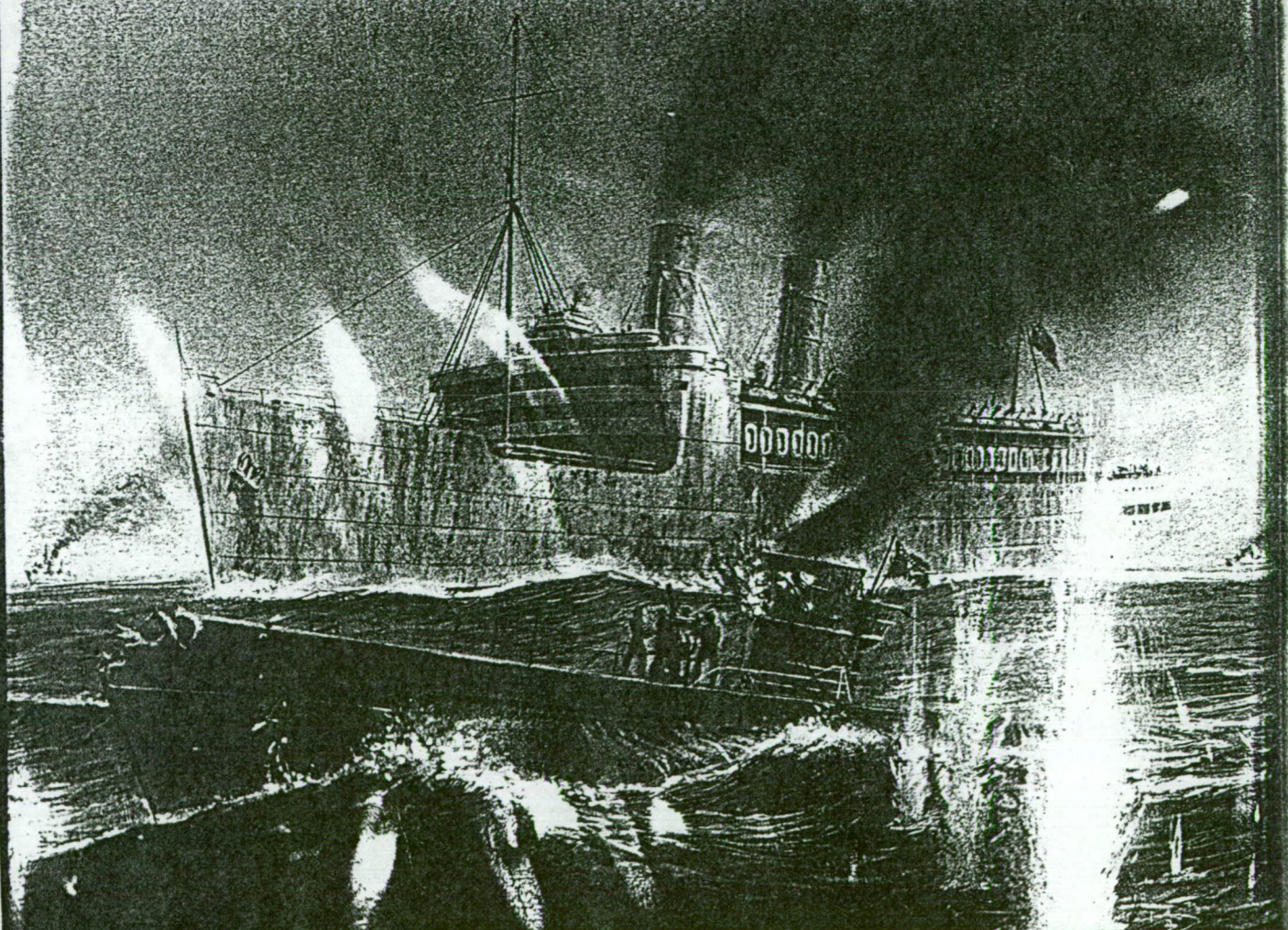


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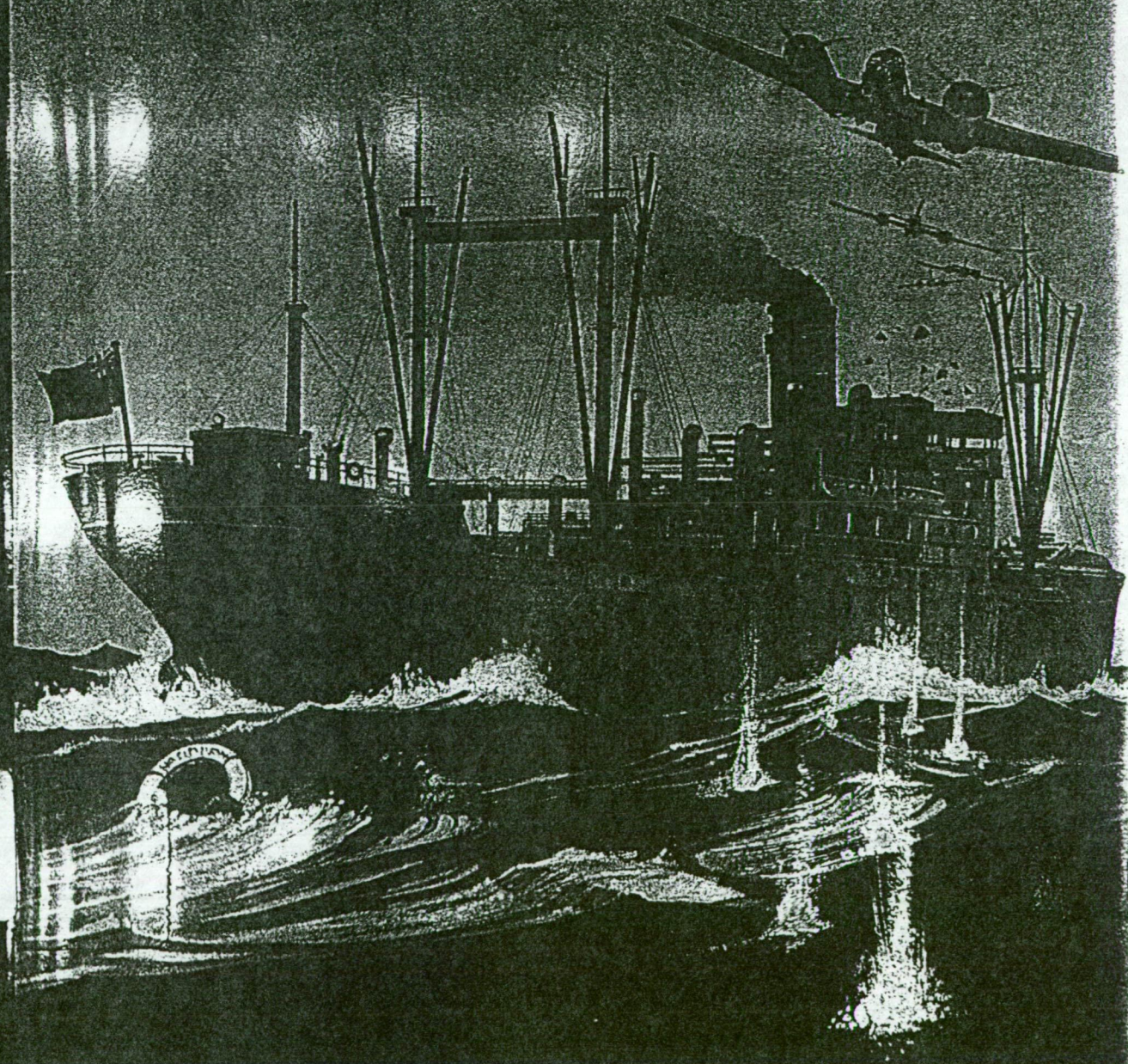


McCutchan's 1990's mythical Merchant Navy serial novels, Kemp & Cameron.  
Heavily-mythical art, as befits their melodramatic content.



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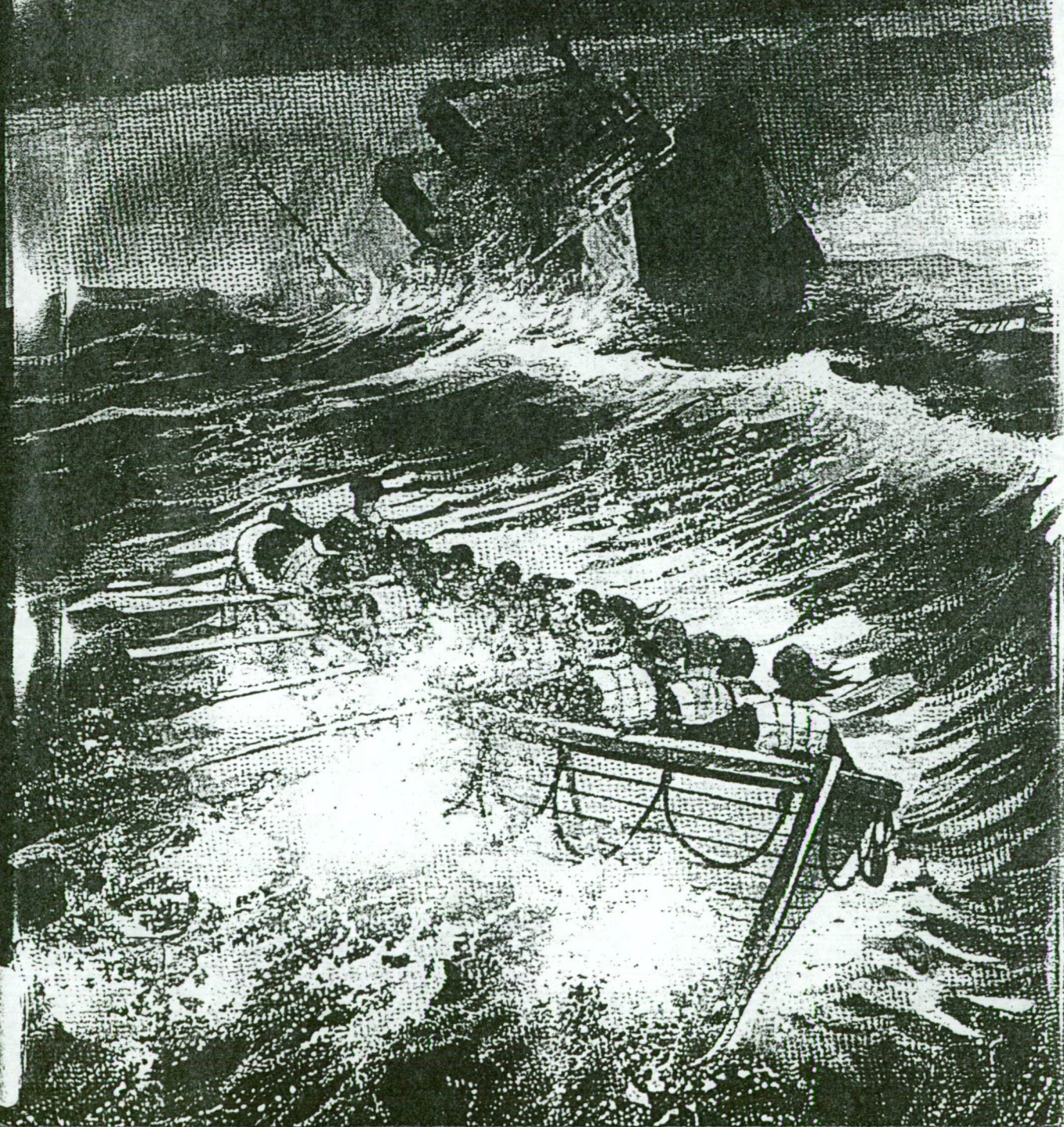
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artwork of books reissued in the 1970's was clearly less representative than first editions. Irrespective of story, content, even of the type of history, a dramatic and unreal image was employed to gain attention, and attract both knowing afficionados and unsuspecting general readers.

In some cases it was justified. Irving's 1985 expurgated paperback PQ-17 had ships dive-bombed by Ju88's; real, if hardly common. Even this, however, was from Schofield's 1964 paperback Russian Convoys. This, and other Arctic Convoy, books usually used one or other of a pair of classic images from PQ-18, taken a few hours apart.<sup>10</sup> The Battle, fortunately for its credibility and resistance to trivialisation, unfortunately for its lack of cultural penetration, has had no single classic image. Robertson's 1956 Walker RN paperback art contrastingly displayed Walker over depthcharge-crews on a backdrop of a column of water, clearly from photographs. This, or a variant, perhaps of an elderly destroyer, should be the cover of every Atlantic book. It would be repetitive, as is much of the literature, but only slightly mythological. A destroyer, freighter, U-Boat or corvette alone [e.g plates 5.5, 5.6, 5.7] in mountainous seas, would be entirely appropriate.

Others were totally mythical or unrealistic. The paperback Kola Run [Plate 5.9] had three elements: a surfaced U-Boat at night with gun manned; a rugged-up Royal Navy officer with binoculars and reddened bare face centered; while on the right a freighter with a waterline explosion which ought to be a torpedo hit but was probably intended to be a hit from the rarely-used U-Boat's gun opposite. Even Broome's second edition of his humorous history Make Another Signal (1973) had a stereotypical fleet-destroyer's guns warding off a departing Fw200.<sup>11</sup> These covers not only comprised the marketer's conception of how to sell, but also the commercial terminus of the myth and myth-making. This was and is how the factual and fictional Battle is seen by the publishers. This is how it has been presented to the Battle's audience, and how they have tended to see it, continually reinforced by such stereotypes.

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<sup>10</sup> Either the explosion of the ammunition ship *Mary Luckenbach*, or "bomb from a German Ju-88 bursts close alongside Hunt-class destroyer HMS *Wheatland* as Tribal-class destroyer HMS *Eskimo* speeds between convoy lanes, PQ-18, 14.Sep.1942."

<sup>11</sup> Evolutionary Biologist Stephen J. Gould lamented about the lack of control over the misrepresentations of illustrations and cover-art in foreign editions in Wonderful Life: the Burgess Shale & the Nature of History, Hutchinson, London, 1989, p.33.

The tales themselves tended to contain more gun duels and bombings than mere escort and convoy drudgery, in both fact and fiction. When the novels did contain such things, the cover art, jacket blurb and teasers never let on.

In one sense, 1969-75 was a watershed. 1974 made permanent and radical changes to how Second World War and Battle history would be written and viewed. Documents released under the 30-Year Rule made dramatic changes to historical content. Publishers had constant pressures to produce more marketable material, just as postwar revelations had enabled 'now it can be told' novels and films.<sup>12</sup> Winterbotham's Ultra Secret, 1974, as Gardner relates, said little about the Battle but revealed Ultra to an amazed world.<sup>13</sup> Roskill's general Naval Policy Between the Wars, 1976, set out how Britain came to be poorly prepared for the Battle, while Churchill & the Admirals, 1977, demonstrated his nefarious effects on the Admiralty, 1912-45. Roskill's posthumous 1986 Strategy of Sea Power described more Mahanian and post-Mahanian theories. Hough's Longest Battle: the War at Sea, 1987, gave overall coverage, adding Ultra. Underlining the slow change, P.Kennedy's Rise & Fall of British Naval Mastery, Second Edition, 1983, was the first book since Mahan in 1890, to take sea-power theory apart.<sup>14</sup> Busch's German Navy, 1939-45, 1974, provided a comprehensive photo-essay while Hitler's Naval War related operations, with myths but without operational experiences.<sup>15</sup>

Costello & Hughes's Battle of the Atlantic, 1977 was the first single-volume comprehensive secondary history. Not academic, and supportive of myth as any, its coverage was good for the time, though the Royal Canadian Navy and Brazil were all but unmentioned. It exemplified the new era. These two professional TV authors created a general account. This type was previously written by participants: dry operational history such as MacIntyre's, or melodrama such as Lund & Ludlam. Van der Vat's later Atlantic Campaign,

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<sup>12</sup> As seen with the 1969 anniversary republishing of Prien's autobiography: maintaining sales and interest.

<sup>13</sup> Gardner in Howarth & Law op.cit. p.530-1.

<sup>14</sup> Rodger in Rodger, ed, 1996 op.cit, Introduction, pp.xix.

<sup>15</sup> Myths were that the Kriegsmarine was outnumbered, overshadowed by the army and Luftwaffe, that early advantages and successes were not built upon, and that the men were brave and served well. No opinions, anecdotes, or information were given about personnel, and thus nothing of how the war felt or changed.

1988, was more inclusive. Pitt's Time-Life: WW2: the Battle of the Atlantic, gave coverage in text and photo-essay fashion, but little insight, nor did Botting's Time-Life: the Seafarers: the U-Boats, 1979. Keegan's Price of Admiralty, 1978 summarised the Battle in a chapter among other key historic battles, Potter's (ed) Seapower: A Naval History, 1981, included both campaigns, something generally neglected from general works like Chambers's 1978 War at Sea. Hoyt's simplistic and frequently inaccurate U-Boat Wars, paraded limitations and omissions. While he focussed on British as against American Ultra work<sup>16</sup>, unlike more recent accounts, he nevertheless excluded other services, concentrating on US efforts at sea, from the early 'benign' era incidents (*Greer, Kearney and Reuben James*,) to the later Carrier Task Groups in the central Atlantic. Hoyt mythically discussed horrifying losses along the US East coast but never condemned King's policies. PQ-17 was made an example of, without condemning Pound - or those at sea.

By comparison Joneses trio showed what was possible, given limited space and resources, from the very large story of the Battle. U-Boat Aces and Their Fates, 1988, related stories of the great ship-sinkers; Prien, Schepke, Kretschmer *et al.* Month of the Lost U-Boats, 1978, had limitations Autumn of Lost U-Boats, 1984, overcame: it didn't explain the Battle or place the Month (May 1943) in context. It was intended for those who merely wanted the stories of all 41 U-Boats lost that month, in sequence, and as much detail about each, without resorting to bare statistics. Milner's 1985 North Atlantic Run was the first major monograph to discuss the Royal Canadian Navy's Battle since 1952.<sup>17</sup> Here were first laid bare the technical and training shortcomings and governmental and leadership over-ambition, for the specialist and generalist. Boutilier's 1982 RCN In Retrospect, conference proceedings, covered the whole navy, with three papers relating to the Battle. Macpherson's River Class Destroyers in WW2, 1985, was a technical discussion. Hadley's 1985 U-Boats Against Canada, related neglected inshore operations, in addition to integrating technical developments to some degree, and providing a vital view of Canadian wartime perceptions. Douglas's 1988 RCN In Transition was another conference proceedings, which heralded

<sup>16</sup> A very ploughed field, with US neglect due to later, more rigorous classification of cryptology.

<sup>17</sup> Earlier works like Lawrence (1979) were personal or general.

growing academic interest in the campaign and Canada's role. Zimmerman's excellent Naval Battles of Ottawa, 1989 revealed the technical and political interface problems at Headquarters which caused so many operational shortcomings.

Personal histories continued to be as popular as broad works or narrowly-focussed technical books. There was little consistency in any area. Pearce's 1975 Ship that Torpedoed Herself initiated his three works. Last Call For HMS *Edinburgh*, 1982, more melodramatic but as mythic, read like Morrison's Journal of the *Bounty*: a poorly written personal story enhanced with unlikely vignettes and rewritten choice extracts from HMS *Ulysses* and Kola Run. What he did or thought was never seen, only what happened from an anonymous observer in his position. Running the Gauntlet, 1989, covered the entire campaign. Smith's 1975 Arctic Victory, perhaps the first incidental history written by a relative, described PQ-18, the key balanced convoy after the scattering of PQ-17.<sup>18</sup> Schofield's updated, Ultra-inclusive Arctic Convoys, 1977, compared well with Taylor's junior-orientated 1976 US Merchant Marine-based Battle in the Arctic Seas: the Story of PQ-17. Irving's 1980 revised PQ-17 removed the passages accusing Broome, and thus much of the original edition's force. Kerslake's Coxswain in the Northern Convoys, 1984 was another personal account, of the same events. Hough's 1985 biography Fraser of North Cape described his efforts for prewar anti-submarine warfare, and *Scharnhorst's* sinking, among other activities. P.K. Kemp's 1978 Decision at Sea: the Convoy Escorts, added to his 1957 Victory at Sea. His Russian Convoys, 1987 was an effective photo-essay by the Imperial war Museum's head of naval photographs. Grano's PQ-17 account "Zig-Zag" described one of a very few Australian seamen's Arctic service.<sup>19</sup> Poolman's representations varied through 1982's Sea Hunters from light tales of glory and death in 1985's Armed Merchant Cruisers, to solid technical and operational history in Escort Carrier: HMS *Vindex* at War, 1983.

<sup>18</sup> Broome was also there, but 'safely' separated, escorting the covering battleships. Smith, P, Arctic Victory: Convoy PQ-18, William Kimber, London, 1975, Appendix 4, np.

<sup>19</sup> Journal of the Australian Naval Institute, August 1987, p.63-74.

A few personal, incidental, technical, or ship histories stood out. Lombard-Hobson gave the clearest presentation of Allied Battle myth yet in 1983's A Sailor's War:

"Documentaries and films on the Battle have tended to mislead the public into thinking it was plain bloody murder all the time by giving the reader or viewer a vivid picture of frightful slaughter lasting many days and nights, and resulting in appalling losses. Monsarrat's epic of the U-Boat war certainly describes every convoy passage as one long night of terror and destruction, and every ocean crossing a relentless struggle...taken over the whole period, the great majority of convoys got through without interference or mention; and the Atlantic, more often than not, is agreeably kind."<sup>20</sup>

Whinney's 1986 U-Boat Peril covered much the same ground as those preceding: *Athenia's* sinking, *Courageous*, *Royal Oak*, *Spee*, before personal U-Boat hunts. It was less mythic, blending mundane events with restrained description of attacks and sinkings.<sup>21</sup> Van der Vaat ended his otherwise outstanding The Atlantic Campaign of 1988 with

"The campaign was not an exercise in statistics, but a story of waste on a numbing scale, whether of men, ships and submarines built in haste and destroyed in moments, food and precious cargoes sent to the bottom, vast sums of money. A few vivid images remain: of seamen burning and choking in blazing oil, instantly freezing to death in the Arctic, flashing magazines blowing warships to smithereens, unspeakably gruesome remains rising from submarines, the haunting death-throes of stricken ships, of endless cries for help from the water. Here and there a dash of chivalry in total war."<sup>22</sup>

This was still how the Battle was seen and presented.

Kennedy's Pursuit: Chase & Sinking of the *Bismarck*, 1974 was an excellent narrative: blending a series of personal and accounts; literate, emotional, analytical, omniscient. Hoyt's Life & Death of HMS *Hood*, 1977, ('rebadged' as Sunk By the *Bismarck*, 1980) was a travesty by comparison, though both concentrated on the famed incident, not the mundane campaign. Coles's 1980 Flagship *Hood*, improved, while Baron Mullenheim-Rechberg's Battleship *Bismarck*, 1980, was a more detailed German account.<sup>23</sup> Kennedy's Menace: Life & Death of the *Tirpitz*, 1979, lessened his evocative narrative style in favour of technology. Roberts' Battlecruiser *Hood*, 1982, confined itself to schematics, as did Archibald's Fighting Ship in the Royal

<sup>20</sup> Lombard-Hobson, S, A Sailor's War, Orbis, London, 1983, p.54. Lombard-Hobson was Monsarrat's captain for a time; one of the models for Cruel Sea's Ericson. Here he even debunked myth of the Atlantic's notorious weather.

<sup>21</sup> Whinney, Cdr. R, The U-Boat Peril, Blandford, London, 1986: for convoy life, sans combat, on p.123 only. It was reprinted in 1998 with more of his own photographs, but no changes to the text. The new photos alone had the effect of giving a more personal slant to the account.

<sup>22</sup> van der Vat, D, The Atlantic Campaign, Hodder & Stoughton, 1988, p.382.



Navy 1894-1984, 1984. Other general and technical volumes grew in size, quality, and frequency. Westwood's Fighting Ships of WW-II, Ellises Famous Ships of WW-II, van der Porten's Pictorial History of the German Navy in WW-II (all 1976), Casey's Naval Aircraft 1939-45, 1975, and Connell's Fighting Destroyer, 1976, all showed the benefit of contemplation after access to sources. Schmalenbach's 1979 German Raiders focussed on glorious ships, as had Garrett's 1978 Scharnhorst & Gneisenau: the Elusive Sisters. Bassett's Battlecruisers, 1981, was narrative but peripheral. More largely technical non-mythic works emerged, spreading like oil over the surface of topics.<sup>24</sup> Gibson's Death of a Phantom Raider, 1987, not only elaborated yet another raider's career, it also discussed a small German controversy. As with Buchheim, the lone survivor was subjected to ridicule and abuse for his story and portrayal.<sup>25</sup>

Omnibus editions in addition to biographies were possible by 1976, both for MacLean and other thriller novelists, and maritime authors. Monsarrat at Sea collected wartime fiction and autobiography. His captain, Lombard-Hobson, gave a staid autobiography in A Sailor's War, 1983.<sup>26</sup> Baker's Terror of Tobermory: An Informal Biography of Gilbert Stephenson, 1977 begged the question were any formal. Williams's Capt. Roberts & the U-Boat School, 1979 filled vital spaces about these two key men, while the long silence on the Royal Canadian Navy ended with Waters's Bloody Winter, 1984, after Lawrence's unrepresentative 1979 A Bloody War: One Man's Memories of the Royal Canadian Navy, 1939-45.<sup>27</sup> Wellings's O.H.M.S: Observations of the Royal Navy Home Fleet, 1940-41, 1983, related an American attache's

<sup>23</sup> It compared well with Brennecke's thoroughly unreliable 1960 Schlachtschiff Bismarck, (Köhlers Verlagsgesellschaft, Herford) though that contained information not seen elsewhere.

<sup>24</sup> Hansen's Ships of the German Fleets 1868-1945, 1974, Preston's First Submarines, Submarines Since 1919, 1974, Illustrated History of the Navies Of WW-II, 1976, Battleships 1919-77, 1977, U-Boats, 1978, Aircraft Carriers, 1979, Cruisers, 1980, Dreadnought to Nuclear Submarine, 1980, History of the Royal Navy, 1983. Lenton's German Warships of the Second World War, 1975, Young's A Dictionary of Ships of the Royal Navy of WW-II, 1975, Raven and Roberts's British Battleships of WW-II, 1976, and British Cruisers of WW-II, 1980; Pemsel's Atlas of Naval Warfare, 1977, Ireland's Warships, Lyon's Encyclopaedia of the World's Warships, 1900-78, 1978, Haines's Cruiser at War, 1978 and Destroyers at War, 1982, Moore's Warships of the Royal Navy, 1979, Grove's Hardware of WW-II, 1984, and Whitley's German Cruisers of WW-II, 1985.

<sup>25</sup> Declared dead, rescued from a raft of suspiciously-injured dead men, he spent the rest of his life, like Anastasia Romanov, trying to establish his bona fides. Blair's purely operational account makes no mention of any controversy, vol.2, op.cit p. 199.

<sup>26</sup> Lombard-Hobson was, unlike Cruel Sea's Merchant Navy-transfer Ericson, however, a regular Royal Navy officer unwillingly in anti-submarine warfare.

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence like Lombard-Hobson was another regular who felt unhappy in ASW, unlike Whinney qv, who realised its importance.

experiences. Buell's 1980 Master of Seapower: Adm. Earnest J King gave a balanced picture of the man, demonstrating that much myth and controversy were contemporary and political, not actual and supportable by sources. Padfield's 1984 Dönitz: the Last Führer remains the only critical and analytical biography: Howarth called it magisterial.<sup>28</sup> Marcuses DEMS? What's DEMS?, 1986, complained about forgotten Australian navy servicemen on merchant ships, mythically ignoring the merchant seamen who actually manned the guns. A.Kemp's 1982 German Commanders of WW-II included Dönitz only because he became Führer, ignoring any stories of dull but vital leaders such as Raeder or Canaris, or numerous ace U-Boat commanders. It was symptomatic of the lower esteem held of naval and maritime matters compared to other Second World War interests, for the modeller-buff-collector techno-historical readership which comprises much of the current market.<sup>29</sup>

Broad selections of mythic experiences were provided by Hay's 1982 War Under the Red Ensign and Slader's 1988 Red Duster at War, while Evans' "Merchant Mariners" showed that commemoration and adequate support were still lacking.<sup>30</sup> Padfield's 1981 Beneath the House Flag of P&O avoided mention of war service almost totally. Cowden's Price of Peace, 1981, was a limited, almost 'vanity publishing' history of Elder Dempster's war losses. Assembled ship by ship from convoy reports, without experiences, only the final voyage of lost ships were mentioned: nothing of the company, or its service. All were typical tales of a few foundering and constructive losses among bombing and torpedoing. By comparison, Barker's Goodnight, Sorry for Sinking You was far more thorough and worthy, even while it only told the ordeal of the survivors of one sinking. It combined accuracy and humanity without sentimentality, and made the important distinction between what people thought, and what some of the facts were: their opinions were presented as such, not the case in many personal or oral accounts. The Ship

<sup>28</sup> An uncritical German biography, Steinert's Capitulation: the Dönitz Regime (Constable, London, 1969), was limited to the last months of the war; there is also the rare Busch's GrossAdmiral Dönitz: Gross Strategie des U-Boot-Krieges, [Landser Military paperbacks #105], Erich Pabel Verlag, nd. The only other account of Dönitz is also by Padfield, in Howarth's Men of War: Great Naval Leaders of WW-II, 1992.

<sup>29</sup> Soldiers and airmen are better known and more popular, therefore books intended for this audience concentrated on them. Presumably no-one would paint tiny figurines of Canaris or Ribbentrop.

<sup>30</sup> Australian Reveille, V.55 N.2, March 1980, p.15.

reviewed it as “an authentic picture of life and attitudes in the 1940s”.<sup>31</sup> Barker always kept the human story at the centre. There was unfortunately nothing of the Battle’s context at all: the lives and backgrounds of the passengers were related, not why life at sea was dangerous, and why the ship was sunk.

Perhaps the best description of a single convoy battle, in its narrative balance and style, was Revelly’s 1979 ONS-154: the Convoy that Nearly Died. A post-Ultra account, before Milner’s revision of the Royal Canadian Navy’s escort shortcomings, it featured very effective diagrammes of the whittling-away of the convoy over time. Almost a top-down history, it balanced a personal story with official texts from the Merchant Navy, Royal Canadian Navy and U-waffe. It was a little more mechanical when describing the losses of other ships, though the U-Boat sections were lively (as a result of meeting, as old men, with a former U-Boat Commander). Inventiveness, clarity and style prevented the narration of shipping losses one after the other becoming tedious, though the usual ‘waiting to see who survived’ remained.

Text and style were slower and less deft in Middlebrook’s 1976 Convoy: the Battle for SC-122 & HX-229. Combined with Rohwer’s equally scholarly Critical Convoy Battles of March 1943, it provided a complete picture of convoy life, with one important exception: the 97% of convoys, ships and men never attacked. During the crisis of December 1942-May 1943 there were few convoys which escaped unseen or unmolested. That was partly why those months were critical, but it has skewed thinking of the whole Battle as being like this. Creighton had counter-mythically stated the forgotten experience of the majority in 1955.<sup>32</sup> Rohwer and Middlebrook were more praised for attention to detail, non-sentimentality and calm viewpoint, as well as factual grasp, than presentation sans mythology. Middlebrook took a personalised, unsentimental, participant’s viewpoint, from both sides, mainly of Royal Navy and Merchant Navy crews. Rohwer concentrated on grand strategy and technology’s devolution onto tactics, avoiding diversion by Ultra. He noted it came too late to advantage comprehensive rewriting; as no primary documents were yet available. In later translated editions Rohwer was skilled and

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<sup>31</sup> From its jacket blurb.

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter Three this volume.

restrained enough not to allow Ultra to dominate. He recognised the vital truth about Enigma, Ultra, HF/DF, and SigInt. HF/DF played the larger part, even at this late stage of the cryptological game.<sup>33</sup>

Beesly's 1982 Very Special Intelligence,<sup>34</sup> supplanted McLachlan's 1968 pre-Ultra book on wartime naval radio-intelligence; his Room 40, described its Great War predecessor. His "Operation Intelligence & the Battle of the Atlantic" countered Ultra myths. "The role of intelligence was vital...by this I do not mean the struggle was won by backroom boys sitting in comparative comfort and safety."<sup>35</sup> This was a point often lost on audiences of populist books and TV, such as Station X and Very Special Intelligence. "We must be careful not to overemphasise the value of decryption."<sup>36</sup> Russell's 1980 "Ultra & the Campaign Against the U-Boats in WW2" was for long a classified American National Security Agency document, now available electronically.<sup>37</sup> Winton's Ultra At Sea, 1988 bought into the muted controversy, less effectively than his masterly generalised Convoy of 1983 and 1990. This related the entire history of commerce protection from the Roman era forward, concentrating on both world wars. It demonstrated continuity and change over an even greater period than usual. Effective debunking of the Ultra myth began with the 1981-89 Official History of British Intelligence in the Second World War, but only began to gather force after 1990.

Doyen of postwar aircraft historians, Chas Bowyer, also contributed to Battle myth. Coastal Command at War, 1979 combined earlier experiences and myth, as Southall had. By 1985 he was writing what had always been understood, less frequently stated: "If U-Boats had cut off the UK, it could not have survived more than a few months."<sup>38</sup> This was in every Battle and U-Boat book but rarely put so explicitly, or its timeframe (months, not weeks) laid out. This

<sup>33</sup> In that it allowed the escorts on the spot to run down the bearing of a signal and scare off or attack a U-Boat, dispensing the complicated expensive and above all incredibly classified work at Bletchley to extract what the signal actually said: more valuable in the long run but of less use to an SOE beset on all sides by elusive, deadly, enemies.

<sup>34</sup> Subtitled The Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre in World War Two.

<sup>35</sup> Beesly "Operational Intelligence & the Battle: the Role of the RN's Submarine Tracking Room" in Boutillier [ed] 1982 op.cit p.176.

<sup>36</sup> Douglas & Rohwer in Ibid, p.189.

<sup>37</sup> Russell, 1980, "Ultra...Against the U-Boats in WW2": <http://omni.cc.purdue.edu/~pha/ultra/navy-1.html>

<sup>38</sup> Bowyer 1985 op.cit, introduction, np.

gave rise to several interpretations.<sup>39</sup> The Orbis Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Aircraft, Issues 83-87, 1983, included the Battle's air operations, serialised and mythic, for aeroplane buffs only. Aberrations like Ratcliffe's Liquid Gold Ships: a History of the Tanker, 1859-1984, 1985, avoided the war completely. It covered economics and brief technology, like Padfield (P&O, 1981), despite the construction, experiences, and high losses requiring attention. Hamilton's 1986 compilation of oil paintings on key events and scenes War at Sea 1939-45, was as mythical as any text or photo-essay, devoid of mundanity.

A template for an as-yet-unwritten comprehensive technical history, Watts' U-Boat Hunters, 1976, was almost outstanding. It covered not only all Allied vessels, technologies and equipment, but also had a short but detailed concise and effective history, phase by phase. It was unfortunately a secondary-source based account, though with Ultra and Signals Intelligence there was no official history for another decade in any case. It also lacked a conclusion or overview. A text combining and analysing technology and events is yet to be written. What it lacked most was a chapter on men other than leaders. It would have benefitted enormously from a discussion of their impact on strategy, morale, and tactics, as well as Stephenson at Tobermory and Roberts at WATU.<sup>40</sup> Women were even more strikingly absent, considering their large role in operational administration, in cryptology at Bletchley and training at WATU and Tobermory's HMS *Western Isles*. Discussing the skills, ideas, and effect of the great Escort commanders would have perfectly complimented weapons and sensors.<sup>41</sup>

Rössler's huge comprehensive technical history The U-Boat was totally outside the realm of the buff and fan. "Sadly, technical history remains the poor relation of history and engineering, even though it should play a key role as a lynchpin between the two disciplines. Many historical events can only be explained within the framework of technical developments, of important events and even of large misconceptions, just as technical developments may only be appreciated when one

<sup>39</sup> The Battle was never close, and should not have been a worry; or months were not long, given the needs of peacetime nations increased with war construction. Trade convoys "replenished the nation's larder", perhaps the best definition of them. They were not an instantaneous feed, with instant effects following on every loss, but everything they carried, and everything lost, was vital. Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Tobermory was the tactical base for working up new crews in seamanship, weaponry and tactics. The Western Approaches Tactical Unit trained captains and officers in leadership tactics and offensive anti-submarine warfare strategies: how best to confront U-Boat pack-attack at sea.



takes account of the historical background."<sup>42</sup> Here Rössler put his finger on the problem later brought up by Milner in the second of his two RCN volumes, and by Zimmerman at the British fiftieth Anniversary conference. There is still very little idea of the influence of technology beyond broad strokes which highlight the significance of HF/DF, radar, ASDIC, Snorkel. There is nothing at all on how these and the human-technology interface actually operated, or were perceived.

Counter-mythology was rarely served directly. Hinsley's Official History of British Intelligence in the Second World War, (Six vols, 1979-90) finally actually showed the relative roles Ultra, HF/DF, *et al* played, compared to fighting and logistics. Such non-or-countermyth was buried by the scale of the surrounds. Barnett's Iron Britannia: the Falklands War & British National Opinion, 1982, related the myths of 1982 to the Churchillian ones of 1940, as well as Thatcher's "abuse of Churchillism".<sup>43</sup> It also unintentionally showed the gap between media opinion and public opinion, passing off the former as the latter.<sup>44</sup> Lane's Grey Dawn Breaking: British Merchant Seafarers in the Late 20<sup>TH</sup> Century, 1986, made the point that "everyone at sea since 1945 has worked with wartime seamen."<sup>45</sup> one reason Battle myths have been pervasive. More recent seamen have absorbed the mythic experiences of participants.

There were slow shifts in Battle writing between 1980 and 1995. Certainly 1960 was a date after which there were no more movies, and after which a social revolution began swamping the memorialisation of past events.<sup>46</sup> In another sense 1969 and 1974 were not so much watersheds, as Ultra impacted in Britain first. When Canadian writings emerged, Ultra was already part of the historical landscape. Academic history was more prevalent.

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<sup>41</sup> Such as Walker, Gretton, Broome, MacIntyre, Campbell.

<sup>42</sup> Rössler, *op.cit*, p.9.

<sup>43</sup> Such as the British 'right' to defend sovereign territory, the 'Britishness' of responses to the crisis [defiance, moral outrage, national unity in a time of decline], compared to Churchillian language, and the sense of Elizabethan and Napoleonic-era invasion peril prevalent in 1940 and 1982. In 1982 it was largely only British rights that were infringed, though it was portrayed as if Britain had been invaded, not merely tiny dependent territories 8800miles away. Events were seen almost exclusively through Churchillian-Elizabethan eyes, rather than coolly describing the overseas deployment of military forces. Cited in Calder 1991 *op.cit* p.xiv.

<sup>44</sup> The press and parliamentary reports were not identical to opinions by ordinary people. Indeed the strongly patriotic and militaristic opinions of both sides of parliament were distinct from many ordinary citizens as well as the academic left.

<sup>45</sup> Lane 1986 *op.cit* p.41.

<sup>46</sup> Fears, *loc.cit*.

Canadian Battle history, unadorned since the early 1950s, was never as revolutionised as British or American.<sup>47</sup> Practically all Battle work in Canada occurred after 1979, given the availability of primary sources, admission of neglect, and the desire to revise. Both Gardiner and Law (1993), and this author agree these distinctions are convenient clarifying tools for manipulating the past. The revelations of 1974 did not change cinema. Documentary was so infrequent it played no part in or could be affected by any changes, though 1978's Battle documentary featured Ultra.<sup>48</sup> Little changed in fiction. No new perspective emerged after Das Boot. That was different content, not style or theme. Clear distinctions have been difficult and broke down under too much analysis. New histories in the style of 1950's works emerged from established and new authors. Much new material after 1974 merely inserted Ultra with little consideration of its ramifications for events, or how it and the campaign were represented.

Schofield's 1981 article "Defeat of the U-Boat in W.W.2" pointed out it was Winterbotham and then the November 1978 German naval history conference which set Ultra as the revision point.<sup>49</sup> At this conference all points leading to the defeat were given equal time: Ultra, convoying, escorts, training, radar, HF/DF, diversion, escort carriers, and very-long-range anti-submarine warfare aircraft. By late 1978 the general impression, even if not borne out by most texts upon a closer reading, was that Ultra alone won the Battle, and the war. It had lodged in the minds of many participants, and penetrated the public mind. Populist books and TV series like R.V. Jones' Most Secret War, (1979) emphasised and permanised ideas of a clean war fought and won by 'boffins', backroom boys and black boxes, instead of the bloody, personal war of attrition fought by combatants and civilians alike. Schofield was careful to point out the key elements of the struggle and defeat, non-mythically making the distinction between how things seemed and how they were. His position in hindsight did not blind him to how things might have concluded.<sup>50</sup> Schofield made no mention of any postwar taking-up of the myth of disastrous losses, and clearly he could see there was a difference between wartime perception

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<sup>47</sup> There was no canon, nor a vast body of existing work and opinion for Ultra to overturn.

<sup>48</sup> A little too early to be 'reinterpreted in the light of Ultra'; though it did describe Ultra's participation.

<sup>49</sup> Schofield, B, "Defeat of the U-Boats During World War II", Journal of Contemporary History Vol 16, Jan 1981, p.127.

and postwar fact. He also pointed out how considerable morale problems, especially in the Merchant Navy, offset shipping repair and construction. It was not all myth, nor all merely competing British and American demands on shipping allocations.<sup>51</sup>

As with the Immediate Post-War Era, the '30-Year Rule' vein ran thin. Analytical accounts and taking stock did not make good cinema, even if they might make good documentary.<sup>52</sup> It did not have to contend, as did British film in the 1960s, with an end to tariffs or a consequent fall in funding.<sup>53</sup> This boom was self-supporting, lasted longer, and merged with the Anniversary era. Events and controversies had been reassessed in the light of new sources and new interpretations fit for a world thirty years on. Very little new was present, showing why things happened, why others did not, what people knew.<sup>54</sup> Many participants were too traumatised or indifferent to be inspired. Military history, with its apparent fascination with war, killing, weaponry, and death, did not attract historians who could have pushed theory forward. Left-wing historians critical of the policy and actions of their imperialist forebears were yet to be heard. They were involved with other topics in the new era of slightly-right-wing operational history after 1969.<sup>55</sup>

The limited British fascination with the Battle is partly explained by its importance as a historical and national event. It was the most vital part of a deadly serious war for the survival of the nation, the most grave test it has ever faced.<sup>56</sup> British perceptions of the battle and the Battle remained less than the fascination with Dunkirk, D-Day and the Battle Of Britain. Despite the Battle's growing profile in the public mind, the obsession remained a component of the general British fascination with the Second World War as a whole. As John Cleese pointed out, by way of his 'Germans' episode of Fawlty Towers, the

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<sup>50</sup> Blair (1997) saw wartime conceptions as being accepted postwar perceptions.

<sup>51</sup> Blair did not go as far as Smith in excluding ships or fighting from his account, but he still obscured the human cost.

<sup>52</sup> Such as happened to Great War disasters such as Coronel, and *Cressy Hogue* and *Aboukir*, see Ch.2: 1914-45.

<sup>53</sup> Frears, op cit.

<sup>54</sup> But couldn't say: the Ultra secret.

<sup>55</sup> They were suspicious of military history: "a handmaid of militarism...its chief use propagandist and myth-making." What no-one considered exploring was how, what, why, when & where those myths occurred; Howard, op.cit, p.188.

<sup>56</sup> Hobsbawm, op.cit p.38-9; Overy, R, *Why the Allies Won*, Jonathon Cape, London, 1995 p.13; Costello & Hughes 1977 op.cit p.9; Charmley, 1995 op.cit, pp.46 & 359.

British stayed enthralled by it and its public presentation. "It was simply the last time Britain was even remotely significant on the world stage, and they cannot let go of that legacy of empire and world power."<sup>57</sup> British history of the events was as much tied to the era in which they were written as to any tradition of British myth-making, or the events themselves. Though constants run through all the histories of the five eras, to some extent why histories were written, and the audiences they were written for, were plainly creations of their times.<sup>58</sup> These were more than mere opportunities presented by new sources and anniversaries. The wealthy, secure, and above all growing UK of 1960-72 did not need the memories of 1939-45 the way the weakened, tired UK of 1969-79 did. Britain at the time of the first series of Fawlty Towers (1975) was in the grip of a financial, industrial and sociocultural crisis. Wartime power and fame became an excuse for self-pity and reminiscence without connection to the world at hand. "In the 1950-60's, war nostalgia was submerged by an optimistic, forward-looking Britain; in the bad-tempered Britain of the 1970's, angry Left-wing dramatists turned to the Second World War to find the origins of the present crisis in the betrayal of ordinary people after 1945."<sup>59</sup>

Britain's withdrawals from Empire 1945-1982 were largely a civilian and military affair, none requiring convoy. The Navy had very little chance to make publicity from its activities, especially after the debacle of Suez in 1956.<sup>60</sup> Even the Navy's fame and acknowledgment of its finest hour faded somewhat. The Falklands War of 1982, after years of relative neglect, brought the Royal Navy back into the limelight in a way that no NATO exercise or deployment could. Had Argentine submarine activity required convoy, the Battle might have been reused, and remembered differently.<sup>61</sup> Despite her avowed dislike of the Royal Navy and its traditions and resistance, Thatcher could not do without the Royal or Merchant Navies to retake the Falklands and make her political name. Both the Royal and Merchant Navies suffered losses and gained media attention, and the long road back for the 'Senior Service' in both prominence and in actual forces, and for the Merchant Navy, at least in

<sup>57</sup> John Cleese in A-Z of British Comedy, Channel-4, 1994.

<sup>58</sup> Constants are strategy, tactics, technologies, and the minutiae of operational reports: names, tonnages, and losses.

<sup>59</sup> Calder 1991 op.cit, p.266.

<sup>60</sup> Save the Yangtse River/HMS *Amethyst* incident of 1949, filmed 1957 as Yangtse Incident.

<sup>61</sup> Winton 1983 op.cit p.323.

prominence, began.<sup>62</sup> The most rabid opinions and emotional demonstrativeness since VE-Day served the multiple goals of promoting national unity, political solidarity behind the Tories, a distraction from social and cultural problems at home, and a growth of public spending and employment in defence production (something the Thatcher family and the Tories have never left behind).<sup>63</sup> The other consequence was a little belated recognition for the Merchant Navy, much less than in 1939-45, but more than 1945-82. The Falklands War marked the turning point: if 1971 was the nadir of Merchant Navy fortunes, in terms of representation and public perception, since 1982 the position and awareness of the Merchant Navy in the public eye, and its place in scholarship and general writing, have grown steadily. The fiftieth anniversary none too soon integrated the Merchant Navy into general war histories.

Also starkly obvious about the Falklands conflict were the limited evolution (in approach or conceptualisation) of its representations. General, operational, campaign, incidental, personal, memorial and technical accounts emerged, as did TV news-based general documentaries supportive or critical of the Government.<sup>64</sup> Dramatists made a single work on the life of an injured, disadvantaged soldier.<sup>65</sup> There was more realism due to a less restricted (though still jingoistic) press, and more acknowledgment by the Navy of the famous, vital participation of the Merchant Navy's containerships and liners. Documentaries and books commemorated *Atlantic Conveyor* and *Canberra*, the 'Great White Whale', as much as any warship, sourced from news reports and TV footage.<sup>66</sup> The Royal Navy and the public finally realised, in merely the latest of a long line of maritime crises, just how important the Merchant Navy had always been. The Falklands was a clear case of harking back to past glories. This time the past glories were merchant as well as naval.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Barnett 1982, op.cit.

<sup>63</sup> C.f. the actions of Mark Thatcher, international arms dealer supported by his mother's personal contacts.

<sup>64</sup> Critical naval documentary, like *Rule Britannia* [Channel-4/Genesis Productions, 1992], was at least a new theme.

<sup>65</sup> *Tumbledown*, BBC-TV, 1992.

<sup>66</sup> "*Canberra* cruises where *QE2* refuses!", from a soldier's painted banner aboard her.

<sup>67</sup> Both books about the Battle, and about the Falklands War emphasised continuing Merchant Navy traditions; how its members felt themselves to be following the service and sacrifice of both wars. *Atlantic Conveyor's* Captain North was last seen searching alone amid her fires for overlooked survivors, refusing to save himself. More importantly, his crew consciously regarded "Captain Birdseye" as an old-



Military and political works were unpopular in Germany 1970-88, in stark contrast to the US and UK.<sup>68</sup> They only appealed to tiny numbers of ex-participants and small numbers of unseen younger hard-Right Afficionados. Neo-Nazis of later years would feed off these continuing obsessions.<sup>69</sup> Ultra penetrated German writings as everywhere else. It came first with journalist Bøddeker's Caught in the Net, 1981.<sup>70</sup> Intended as an expose, it merely translated existing Western perceptions of Ultra's domination of the Battle, and the ease with which it alone won. The principal effect in Germany was to add to the sense of sacrifice and victimisation some former U-Boat men felt, or had come to feel as a result of mid-1960's books and Buchheim. A few ex-submariners were on Buchheim's side. Bøddeker broke new ground in content, but was trapped in the same narrative tradition as earlier works.<sup>71</sup> Cremer's U-333, the Story of a U-boat Ace, 1982, barely indicated the beginning of a new perspective from other memoirists. That would come later.<sup>72</sup>

Buchheim's 1978 photo-essay U-Boat War and sequels were, without flippancy, 'Regret Publishing'.<sup>73</sup> This began in a sense with Werner. They had no glory, no triumph. The books were devoid of a sense of achievement or even of the necessity of fighting.<sup>74</sup> This regretful mood (without exploring consequences), the theme of all postwar German writing, usually remained absent from non-German books about the Battle. What coffee-table books lacked in content and analysis they compensated for in removing any sense of joy, importance, artificially achieved status or rank, or other ascribed terms of reference for seeing the events and the people involved. Here there was only sorrow, awareness of the stupidity, waste, and futility of it all. There were no gains, advances. These were not unit histories, nor proper memorials: they were not written to remember the dead, only the overall losses.

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style captain of the wartime mold. Hay 1982 op.cit, p.167-8; Villar, Capt. R, Merchant Ships at War: the Falklands, Conways Maritime Press & Lloyds of London, 1984, p.82.

<sup>68</sup> Hadley op.cit p.140.

<sup>69</sup> Kettenacker, L, Germany Since 1945, Oxford University Press, London, 1997, p.319.

<sup>70</sup> Hadley, op.cit, p.153.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid p.154.

<sup>72</sup> Cremer (1982 op.cit, p.269-70), at last reflected on what the war had done to Germany. Only Topp (1991) went further.

<sup>73</sup> Like coffee-table books on the Holocaust, or the Nevada Test Site's effect on surrounding communities.

<sup>74</sup> For postwar German writers there was naturally less ability and opportunity to dwell on necessity, as they had begun the war against Poland and thus France and Britain.

After Buchheim, fiction shifted from the Battle itself to novels about U-Boats, or about ships, or about codes, rather than the sea and the men. Re-mythologisation distorted already limited and formulaic representation. More novels were about warships than freighters, tankers or tugs. Controversy continued, and copies of and variations upon Das Boot as well as earlier works, appeared. Nothing new was attempted by authors, publishers, or audiences. Innovators were working elsewhere: feminism, ethnic minorities, post-modernism. Innovation and de-mythologisation brought attacks, isolation, or legal action, as to Irving and Buchheim, not merely criticism. Nothing counter-mythical emerged from ex-Allied or German writers. Buchheim was re-mythical, he had changed content, but not focus and point: the U-Boat was still the mythical core, now demonised and animated, and the men in it even smaller and weaker than in earlier representations.<sup>75</sup>

A new feature was the reissue and republication of old novels, echoing the rerelease of wartime cinema 1946-52. With new blurb, in glossy new covers, they appeared to be brand new titles for the 1970s and 1980s, not reprints of titles from twenty years before. This has recent parallels, like the current boom in CD remarketing of old music, and remakes of old TV serials and cinema films.<sup>76</sup> Another key feature was the way that real events were fictionalised, how actual events infused the fiction, at times enriching it, as with The Cruel Sea and Whisky Galore. More recently actual events were used to exceed the bounds of credibility and to make some novels truly unbelievable. This would never be accepted by audiences during or shortly after the war: memories were too fresh.<sup>77</sup> Nonfiction began to play more often with non-mythology and counter-mythology, even if the majority of popular and remembered works remained mythical. However, while nonfiction continued to raise awareness, and exorcise personal demons for long-silent authors and readers, novels remained stuck in commerce. Precisely because of their limitations to formula they spoke little of their time or ours, save producers and audience's expectations. Because they needed to sell, and were required by

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<sup>75</sup> Hadley op.cit p.166.

<sup>76</sup> Such as The Fugitive, Lost In Space, Sergeant Bilko.

<sup>77</sup> The Objective Burma rule: from Flynn's very-humorously derided 1-man US Army assault on the Japanese in Burma.

publishers and audience to be released regularly and smoothly, Battle fictions became just another subgenre, unlike nonfiction.

Atlantic novels appealed to the same limited market as nonfiction, but had mainstream mass-market competition. Consumer demand from within the limited market was sufficiently high and uncritical that these books continued to be produced by a growing number of authors, in a bewildering diversity of topics and settings and plots, with no improvement in quality or composition. These novels were still limited, inaccurate, episodic, formulaic and boring. They contained little of the tone or subject of their 1950's predecessors, or even the (relatively) beautiful writing of the classics. Even these at times had been less than they appeared.<sup>78</sup> Ultra even penetrated post-Buchheim fiction, in that it became the key to novels such as Williams' Atlantic Convoy (1979) and Pope's Decoy (1983). Pope worked in minesweepers and ASW trawlers during the war and became the outstanding young new popular naval historian of the immediate post-war era.<sup>79</sup> Secret-mission novels had always existed.<sup>80</sup> Now they had factual codes and hardware. This further excluded and sidelined the actual ASW Battle seen in the classics with carefully placed characters of earlier decades. It was no longer enough. 'Realism' and actual fighting were as exhausted as descriptive metaphor. Only implausible missions or ludicrously-compressed action were worthy of description. Now serials became possible: historian Poolman created Chanter, RN, about the life of a pilot, who flew, fought, and romanced his way through the war.

Prominent and original novelists were no more attracted to the Battle than academic historians. Some, like postwar seamen, wrote about the war absorbed or inspired by parent's stories and memories, or endless TV repeats of movies. Professionals wrote more accurate, better written, more worthy books than participants. They conformed to fiction's standards without the hyperbole and histrionics participants seemed to think necessary to enhance the events, as if the events themselves were not exciting enough.<sup>81</sup> There were few narrative paths. Convoys could be fought through heavy odds, seen

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<sup>78</sup> Monsarrat's wartime nonfiction; HMS Ulysses' origin or resemblance to 1945's shorter Northern Escort: see Ch.3.

<sup>79</sup> Histories such as 73 North, The Black Ships, The Battle of the River Plate, not all Atlantic-related.

<sup>80</sup> Callison's A Flock of Ships, 1970, for instance.

<sup>81</sup> See Ch.2: beginning, introducing characters, development, use of plot devices, climax, conclusion.

from individual or several ships. In others the central character repeated incidents in novel after novel, with supporting characters changing names, not roles.<sup>82</sup> Others featured unlikely secret missions grafted onto routine operations.<sup>83</sup> There were contemporary ephemeral fictions set in every possible area and aspect of the Battle: regular warships, anti-submarine warships, merchant vessels, aircraft, submarines, even shore bases. All were similar in tone and narrative, differing only in name, setting, luridness, or the use of supposedly secret, revolutionary, breakthrough technology to win the Battle at a stroke.<sup>84</sup>

Williams' 1979 Atlantic Convoy was as indicative of the genre as any. It literally had a dozen viewpoints, instead of one in Forrester's The Good Shepherd.<sup>85</sup> Its short chapters jumped from ship to shore to U-Boat to aircraft to ship, advancing every subplot little by little. Devoid of the excessive expression typical of former participant-fiction, it instead had multiple relationships, and too much happening. There was little character development, many hardly being introduced before their deaths. There was romance and sex, in unlikely and uninteresting liaisons between the head of U-boat Operations Paris and his secretary; a U-Boat commander and a rich French girl. Nothing had any emotional weight for them, or the reader. If this author did not feel involved or could not identify with these characters, would other readers? It bulged with 'Objective Burma' errors no 1950's popular author would contemplate: ordinary WRNS knew and used Ultra, there was continual dialogue between Bletchley and the Operational Intelligence Centre, one ship carried materials for nuclear research from America to Britain, with a German agent aboard. There was material enough for half a dozen novels, and a full year's TV-drama serial, but compressed into 237 pages it hardly outlined events before sweeping to the inevitable massed-action climax. No character was familiar enough to care about; it was mere moving of men - and women - and machines about a vast role-playing gameboard.

<sup>82</sup> I.e. series such as Chanter Royal Navy; Convoy Commodore; paralleled by other eras: The Great War, Napoleonic, Late Victorian, post-Second World War.

<sup>83</sup> U-700, Decoy.

<sup>84</sup> An outgrowth of fiction's long preoccupation with counterfactual history, changing to suit whim, especially getting characters out of inescapable binds with miracle weapons or tactics.

<sup>85</sup> Harking back to 1945's forgotten Northern Escort's undeveloped multiplicity of characters: see Ch.3.

Though it was a Cold-War novel, Clancy's 1987 Red Storm Rising indicated continuity as well as change. It was inspired by an actual wargame, and indeed had much less developed narrative and characterisation than his first and later novels. It had the role-turn, move and counter-move feel of a game, not the fuller structure of a story. The wargame, Convoy '84 was an attempt to allow civilians to fight the Battle with modern weapons and sensors, which only NATO powers had done in secret games before. In Red Storm an Islamic attack halved Soviet oil production.<sup>86</sup> It demonstrated another Atlantic Battle would still be a key factor in fighting the resulting non-nuclear ground war in central Europe. It also showed the Battle was still in someone's consciousness: a destroyer was called *Reuben James*.<sup>87</sup> Weather, convoy and escort, airpower (both very-long-range and organic) were explored. Though technology advanced, the rules did not. The Soviets seized key Atlantic defences Norway and Iceland early. Initial conquests determined the Battle's progress, the Battle and possession of bases, as well as adequate convoy defence, partly determined the course of the land war. Echoing The Cruel Sea, the novel ended with the ship mooring, an officer reflecting on life.<sup>88</sup>

Writers of quality popular fiction operated elsewhere: in the horror genre, or in historical or 'thoughtful' (if not serious) fiction. Unlike Monsarrat or MacLean they were not compelled by commercial interest or internal desire to write in an era recovering from a monumental global conflict. Nor did they need to define a relationship to the event. This also accounted for the total silence, bar Das Boot, of warship films after 1960. Studio executives instead concentrated on other issues (rock and roll, social change, espionage) or clearly more famous events, more likely to attract audiences - hence the steady output of fighter plane and commando films until the late 1960's, already exploiting the incipient nostalgia market.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Prompting a Soviet attack on NATO to prevent European intervention in a Soviet attack on Middle-Eastern oilfields.

<sup>87</sup> After the first US Navy destroyer sunk in the Second World War's Atlantic Battle.

<sup>88</sup> Clancy 1986 op.cit, p.830.

<sup>89</sup> Manvell op.cit pp.316, 318.



The last exception to 'the era of Bad Movies', 1950-60, was the 1981 German anti-war Das Boot, from Buchheim's famous 1973 novel. Due to its success and media profile, its rights were quickly sold, as The Cruel Sea's had been, thirty years before. The film and longer TV mini-series, and eventual Director's Cut (1997), were however, Petersen's, not Buchheim's, as Hadley pointed out.<sup>90</sup> Buchheim carried the criticism from Germany and elsewhere, and also disagreed with Petersen on some points of the film, though less with the longer better-paced miniseries, and, one assumes, the much later Director's Cut. Its distortions of fact to fit the needs of cinematic storytelling<sup>91</sup> and distortions of perspective<sup>92</sup> were pure myth: Petersen's re-mythologisation of Buchheim's re-mythologisation. This was how Buchheim coped with his views of the war, Dönitz, the Battle; why he survived while others did not. Oddly, Suid considered Das Boot both covering and whitewashing the Nazi regime, while its characters criticised it. "The filmmakers took pains to remove the issue of the nature of the government for whom the sailors were sacrificing their lives"; then "the manner in which the makers of Das Boot manipulate audiences to forget or forgive the true nature of the Nazi government is insidious", while later "throughout the movie the officers make clear their displeasure with the Nazi regime."<sup>93</sup> So did the film itself: a fly walked across a framed picture of Dönitz: whom Buchheim held responsible for all the killing, then and later. In the novel the correspondent Lt.Werner (Buchheim) only wished it would.<sup>94</sup> This was Petersen, yet Buchheim never spared his criticism of Dönitz. His life since 1945 became increasingly bound up with his growing obsession with U-Boats and Dönitz.

Das Boot was, despite its content, aimed at the youth market: edited and advertised as action and excitement, not tension and boredom in between. Even though it was an anti-war film by a relatively young director, it still had to aim at a young action movie audience, not an adult, film audience.<sup>95</sup> This is one reason why the film's derided lack of discipline aboard existed: to present 1980's youth with Nazi-era discipline would have looked ridiculous. It was not

<sup>90</sup> Hadley op.cit pp.148, 151-2.

<sup>91</sup> Men alive on a burning tanker 6 hours after torpedoing; or many crew killed and *U-96* sunk by strafing at the climax of the novel. Buchheim witnessed such events towards the end of the war, in late 1944.

<sup>92</sup> Anti-Nazi crewmembers openly ridiculing and condemning Hitler, Göring.

<sup>93</sup> Suid in "The Battle in Feature Films" in Runyan and Copes op.cit p.319-20.

<sup>94</sup> It is highly tempting to consider Lt.Werner was named after the author of Iron Coffins...

aimed at those on the right who criticised its misrepresentation, or even those on the left who criticised its apparent lack of condemnation of Nazism. It was trapped with the wrong editing for the wrong audience in the right time and place. As Hadley related, the brooding electronic score by Doldinger had none of the upbeat, glory and pomp of earlier combat films, or even the subdued dramatic theme of The Cruel Sea. Even Das Boot's exciting sections did not have the positive, militaristic tones of most war films, which enhance the action and support the direction and viewpoint of the characters and plot.<sup>96</sup> To this author the action tracks have an urgency coupled with frantic agitation, not excitement.

In January 1978 BBC-TV broadcast episode four of the documentary series The Secret War: "The Battle of the Atlantic."<sup>97</sup> Despite the broad sweep of its title, it concentrated on Allied technical and tactical responses to high shipping losses. Description of losses were confined to one mild incident. It focussed on radar, ASDIC, HF/DF, Hedgehog and Squid, O.R., new U-Boat types, air power, and Ultra. Its problem, or rather the problem for the scholar, was that the Battle and famous participants like Leigh and MacIntyre were used to illustrate these technical advances, rather than illustrating the changes to the campaign through the technology. Content and focus were restricted by serial intentions.<sup>98</sup> The author saw this documentary in Australia in 1980.<sup>99</sup> Only in Germany were there Atlantic documentaries in this period: though naval warfare, the Merchant Navy, and myth were well served by several about the Falklands war. The Hunters & the Hunted [1985], based upon Brennecke's book, countered Petersen's TV miniseries of Das Boot, presenting mythic participant's experiences. Buchheim riposted with Victoried to Death, from his viewpoint. Against England [1987] was balanced and non-mythical, including testimony from both of the Battle's sides (not of the Buchheim debate) but attacked German actions more than Allied. Its promotions stayed mythical. The Grey Wolves [1990] was a reactionary counter-Buchheim counter-Left-

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<sup>96</sup> Hadley op.cit p.149.

<sup>96</sup> ibid p.192-3.

<sup>97</sup> Sgt. Luker, RCAF, in Bowyer 1979 op.cit, p.80.

<sup>98</sup> I.e only topics which fitted the needs of the series were discussed and developed.

<sup>99</sup> And again at the Mitchell Library in Sydney in 1999, startled by how much he remembered of narration, content and style.

Wing documentary from the participant's perspective. Both sides of the Buchheim controversy took turns stating U-Boat myths and portrayal. These were not seen and did not penetrate culture outside Germany.<sup>100</sup>

The era of Ultra and Buchheim must have been ultimately frustrating for those to whom remembrance and recompense were important. Many participants began to die of old age or the medical complications of wartime service. There was a vast amount of activity, (little academic) but nonetheless sources were available and busily used. Interest had risen again. A whole genre of work on the war and the Battle was created, the Merchant Navy featured strongly in a small well-televised war, and anniversaries of famous events eventually occurred. Even official history of intelligence became available. What happened was largely distortion. Sources tended to go to the heads of researchers who did not look beyond simple solutions, or who did not have access to all materials necessary for a balanced judgement. Even once official Intelligence history was available, the idea that Ultra had been everything to winning was difficult to modify. Everything was "reinterpreted in the light of Ultra."<sup>101</sup> Other technologies did not receive their due. The experiences and traumas of participants were lessened once it became possible to imagine a Battle won at Bletchley, not at sea. Documentary could do little to change this, with the excellent "Wolfpack" from the pre-Ultra era, and other representations extolling Ultra's virtues, as well as continuing shipping-loss myths.

Cinema produced a single memorable re-mythologisation, reaching a newer, younger audience, both for the Battle and the novel. The debate about it flourished in new media, bisecting into opposing camps. The filmmaker escaped becoming the butt and fulcrum of the odium, redirected at the novelist. Commercial fiction of the Battle continued to flourish without movement. Serialisation began, for commercial purposes. Ultra's effect upon Atlantic novels with or without secret-mission components, was as profound as its effect on popular and general histories. It would be many years, another

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<sup>100</sup> As with other German works, to continue would be to merely repeat Hadley op.cit, which see pp.164-72.

<sup>101</sup> Gardner in Howarth & Law op.cit p.530.

era, before the Ultra diversion faded and the discourse returned to its previous track. There was more, but frustratingly slow, movement in academia.<sup>102</sup> The Battle continued to be relatively neglected, navies at the expense of fighter aircraft and Merchant Navies at the expense of battlefleets. Recompense beyond ordinary pensions in the UK, and for special benefits in North America and elsewhere, took decades of lobbying to achieve. To paraphrase Simone de Beauvoir, it was not the inferiority of seamen that caused their historical insignificance, it was rather their historical insignificance that doomed them to inferiority.<sup>103</sup> Anniversaries to come promised new recognition.

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<sup>102</sup> The discourse remaining as stuck as always.

<sup>103</sup> Dillon-Malone, A, Women On Women, Macmillan, London, 1995, p.10.

## HISTORY, CINEMA, DOCUMENTARY, AND FICTION, 1989-2000

\*Much history is revisionist. The Battle seems to be an exception. After 50 years, apart from the question of *Ultra*, no-one has seen any serious need to alter MacIntyre's judgement of 1961 in his classic history of the Battle:  
 'It can fairly be said it was in the Atlantic that the Allies could have been most surely defeated.

It was there, instead, that the war was won."

Derek Law, at the Liverpool Fiftieth Anniversary Conference

The Fiftieth anniversary era opened quite mutedly, much of the world focussed on the ending of the Cold War. By the end of 1989 a different Europe was in a better position to view the events of five decades before. Their conclusion had finally arrived.<sup>1</sup> The following five years saw the Fiftieth Anniversaries of everything, no matter how small or peripheral. The Battle was commemorated with ceremonies, exhibitions and conferences.<sup>2</sup> It became a little submerged among more famous events and better remembered campaigns, even as it received greater attention. Ex-participants and their relatives were given a chance to be seen in Liverpool (the place most cognisant of the Battle), Halifax, Toronto and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> French Atlantic commemorations were conditioned by their relationship to wartime German occupation and Allied bombing, rather than being key sites. Commemoration and memorialisation was made for some forgotten incidents. There were also works of all types deliberately written during this period, an 'Anniversary' genre. They were specifically created both to take commercial advantage of heightened interest, and to look back on the campaign from fifty years later. As such they had features that earlier works did not. They did not merely report on the past, they used the artificial space of five decades to discuss changes in attitude. The occasions and works were most obviously memorials, for both living and dead.

A different view of the Fiftieth Anniversary in Liverpool from the official publications, reminiscences and conference was provided by a local poet, Matt Simpson. The only man of his family's generation who did not go to sea, he saw life from a different perspective, even compared to counter-mythical sociologist Lane. Simpson significantly criticised the recollection and commemoration, not the Battle itself. He contended that official

<sup>1</sup> Hobsbawm, E, op.cit, p. 256, 487-8.

<sup>2</sup> Exhibitions at the National Maritime Museum, London, Albert Dock Museum, Liverpool, the Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax NS. Conferences were at Liverpool (29-31/5/93), and Washington-DC. Another on Kola convoys was sponsored by the Moskva Military History Centre and the Roskom Archiv, Moscow, Russia, 17-20/2/93.

<sup>3</sup> Beside memorials in Halifax and Toronto, is there one in Winnipeg? Though they weren't all 'prairie' sailors as Zimmerman pointed out in Hadley et al 1996 op.cit pp.257, 278.



commemoration was not representing the participants properly. It did not capture the experiences while avoiding securing the status quo, nor allowing other, different, less commemorated pasts.

As with previous periods, forces of continuity dominated. Many old-style volumes were written. Change, driven by a broader range of authors, did begin to take effect. There has been increasing professional and academic interest. Representation has been more open to reinterpretation and new theories. New types of representation appeared, significantly, in this era. Both Lane and Hadley moved to the analysis of myth. Second World War seamen received limited de-mythologisation and exploration, as against exposition mainly from seamen themselves. Unexplored areas were introduced, chiefly the service of women, of homosexuals, and of some ethnic minorities.<sup>4</sup> A few academic volumes cannot quickly undo a generation's stolid and solid cultural effort or centuries of myth and relative neglect, but both a distinct shift of influence, and new perspectives, arose. There were more academic subjects given attention in more scholarly surroundings. U-Boat iconography as well as representation was for the first time available to the English reader in an open, easily-understood manner. This was no complex, poststructuralist account for the specialist. Though the book lacked deep meaning and abstruse conclusions, Hadley pointed out that little that is profound can be said of works that are not profound themselves. It was unfortunate there are few other works attempting to push beyond mythologised experience. Powerful experiences still drove many new memoirs, and were communicated to readers.

Exactly what place the Battle had within the Second World War as a whole in the hearts and minds of the public was difficult to gauge. It may never be clear, without mass surveys soon. Those remaining participants remembered, fondly and otherwise. The vicarious audience was a different story. No one has yet completed extensive, scholarly, analytical oral history of what people remember of the perceptions of their postwar childhoods.<sup>5</sup> New

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<sup>4</sup> The greater part of ethnic service by Indians, Africans, West-Indians, Chinese and Lascars, who were a high proportion of merchant navies, have yet to be covered. This will be a task for a new generation of ethnic researchers and authors.

<sup>5</sup> Other than the populist multi-part multinational TV series People's Century, 1900-99.

media like computer games, CD-ROM, and the Internet also contributed to myth and history. 1980's computer games, no longer available, naturally focussed, like board games in decades past, on combat rather than narrative or strategy.<sup>6</sup> There were U-Boat games, where escorts and aircraft must be braved to reach Allied shipping; and warship games with individual or fleet encounters. None involved ASW save the short-lived Atlantic Storm, a card-game where players chose to attack or defend convoys.<sup>7</sup> CD-ROMs could provide a multimedia information bonanza for the researcher, though more likely for the fan.

The Internet became the growth area in memory-keeping and opinion-making about the Battle. The Net was still American-dominated, which meant a certain sort of Battle was remembered prominently, just as it was remembered differently in American text and cinema compared to elsewhere. Armed services had their reasons for remembering certain aspects, while museums, being geographically fixed, also had reasons to attract the public and former participants. The Battle was also harder to find, among millions of sites on the WWW, than in a library or bookshop. Many participants and their relatives placed memories on the net, where there were no editors or publishers, and no market forces, comparatively, to suppress memories. There was unfortunately little chance for the radical and revolutionary to break through the mass of ordinary mythical works and ideas.

The World-Wide Web, after 1995 began to connect media, in a vital new way. The combination of text, images, animation and/or graphics with communications enabled many to correspond via email or through the post. Sites 'hyperlinked' together meant that ex-servicemen and their relatives, fans and researchers, could find each other much more readily. Though all participants and contemporary members of the public were by this point very old, and the WWW a media and technology dominated by the young, simplifications and advances in software and hardware allowed participants,

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<sup>6</sup> Many 1980's games were bypassed by software and hardware advances.

<sup>7</sup> Atlantic Storm's winner "received the convoy as a prize": misrepresentation continued. Recently more computer or internet submarine and fleet simulations appeared, for the serious adult user: Silent Hunter II, Fighting Steel, Iron Wolves, Aces of the Deep, Wolfpack, Drumbeat, and Grey Wolf; [www.Uboat.Net/special/games.htm](http://www.Uboat.Net/special/games.htm). These are only popular with adults; adolescents preferring less serious fictionalised subjects, and more action.

and second and third generation vicarious audiences to put the Battle 'on the Net' in increasing numbers and diversity. Websites were still largely official or commemorative rather than commercial, reflecting the lack of commercial appeal dogging memory of the Battle. Websites did however reflect general ideas. There were links to other, more frequently visited official and commemorative and information sites. There were more naval warfare sites than naval history, more combat and ships than events, more commemorating famous battles than campaigns or operations. Due to American domination, far more sites dealt with Pacific operations.<sup>8</sup>

Official sites demonstrated what services and governments wanted to promote. Museum sites were warship or place-related, though their coverage of more general and mundane topics and themes steadily improved. Private individuals were left to demonstrate the lag in recognition and support for the forgotten and bypassed. There were still less than a dozen sites about the Battle in 1997, spread between Canada, Britain, America and Germany. There were no more than a dozen with Merchant Navy coverage at time of writing.<sup>9</sup> In total there were more than 60 sites by mid-1999, though a quarter were Canadian Veterans-Affairs sites and linked pages, the majority of the remainder American 'Merchant Marine' commemorative and Veterans Affairs sites.<sup>10</sup> Specific sites about exciting events would continue to keep ahead. The prominent U-Boat website was run by a young man in Iceland, Gudmundur Helgason. He became aware of naval history as a child during the 'Cod War' between Britain and Iceland. This became a fascination with the U-Boat, and once he became aware of the Net, it was natural to put this fascination there, there being no U-Boat sites in 1995. He rarely communicated with former U-Boat men, mainly because he was more interested in machines and operations than experiences.<sup>11</sup>

Historical writing was the area of most change. General histories began to integrate the Battle more. This will only pay off in decades to come,

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<sup>8</sup> From surveys of websites and listings carried out May 1996-March 1999.

<sup>9</sup> March 2000. They are at least hyperlinked to each other, and to other websites.

<sup>10</sup> Websites appear, disappear and move with great frequency, so no list have been made here. Typing 'Battle of the Atlantic' into search engines now yields some hits, [64 the current record] whereas it yielded none as recently as 1996.

<sup>11</sup> Helgason, G, pers comm, November 1998.

unfortunately, when all participants are dead. There was not yet enough academic interest to drive new theorisations. Atlantic history was becoming as much the place of experienced, analytical writers as survivors, descendants and 'people with an interest'. The Fiftieth Anniversary era was not prolific in novels, though men continued to write moved by old anguish now bearable in their later years, and commercial pressure to innovate in scene and setting if not style. The Battle was used for the same old tales. Modern convoy and Atlantic-related fiction did not tell as much about their era (or today) as burgeoning non-fiction. Both were a growing market in numbers, and apparent popularity, if not quality or insight. It seemed unlikely another classic novel, or even another bestseller, would result.

War films and combat movies were once again popular in the anniversary era and beyond. Nothing came of this for the Battle, save the release of the director's cut of Das Boot. Restored and with enhanced sound, it bridged the gap between the short original action version and the long TV mini-series. It was still the film Petersen, not Buchheim, always wanted. Reaction in English was muted. Only time will reveal the long-term response. Extended, with tension and tedium replacing action and drama, it could not help improving the original. Fear, worry, claustrophobia and grime were better represented. Enhancement and the strictures of cinema-going made this version quite an experience, without commercials or pauses. It was at last presented to its intended serious adult audience, not the young of the original. It was not promoted this way, but it stood more chance of being seen by those it was meant for. Documentary was more prolific. Individual, particularist documentaries covered the seaman's experience, mythically and overpoweringly, and Black US Navy Atlantic service, poorly. Code-making and breaking featured repeatedly. Most recent and least edifying were mere video compilations of footage. The Battle was also mentioned in other, specific series: oil, ocean liners, general histories of war. There was not enough interest, controversy, or desire to produce more, better TV, though the Anniversary era generated more interest and activity than the previous four decades.

Much history continued mythical content in addition to staid or effusive descriptions, depending on the author. Keegan stated in The Battle For History: Refighting World War Two, that "the history of the Second World War is not yet written: perhaps next century."<sup>12</sup>, still too close and passionate to be written about.<sup>13</sup> His Battle at Sea, 1993, was a reprint of Price of Admiralty.<sup>14</sup> Keegan was both right and wrong: certainly time needs to elapse for perspective to gain. A history acceptable to all would be a useful way of getting everyone to see the same points, even if they didn't agree. Keegan related Ultra's importance without overstatement, allowing Hinsley to be modest about its actual value. There was no chapter on sea warfare as on intelligence, logistics or production. It remained uncertain whether only land events were important, even as he pointed out the divergences in US and British strategy, or the dangers of invading Northern Europe before securing the Atlantic lifeline. The vast majority of the audience were unaware of sea warfare to the same degree. Keegan seemed unwilling to challenge their viewpoint. His discussion of history of the Second World War emphasised works in English, tacit acceptance of its dominance of and dominant interest in the English-speaking world. His description of Irving was also useful, given that PQ-17 remains the only historical controversy of the Battle.<sup>15</sup>

Mythic continuities of misconception persisted. One particularly fostered by popular aircraft magazines was the achievements of the FW-200 *Condor*, the "Scourge of the Atlantic", in Churchill's words.<sup>16</sup> This was myth of both sorts.<sup>17</sup> Headings and blurb announced the terrible losses inflicted by these aircraft, yet the text always explained how fragile those few aircraft were. Comparison with U-Boat sinkings after the first few months was never made, leaving no benchmark to judge performance. Such articles defeated their own purpose, de-mythologising themselves *en route*.

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<sup>12</sup> Keegan, 1995 op.cit, p.30.

<sup>13</sup> A 1-volume history of the US Civil War acceptable to most parties has only just been completed, 134 years afterwards.

<sup>14</sup> See Ch.5: "1974-89.", of this thesis.

<sup>15</sup> Keegan 1995 op.cit p.50.

<sup>16</sup> I.e "Convoy Killer: the Fw *Condor*", Aviation History Magazine, V.6 N.6, July 1996, pp.38-44.

<sup>17</sup> I.e. both the literary definition of myth as understanding, and the common definition of myth as deception.



General works varied. Messenger's 1994 Century of Warfare was a lightweight accompaniment to TV, poorly covering sea warfare. By comparison, the 1989 World At Arms: Reader's Digest Illustrated History of World War Two, (intended for the anniversary market) managed consistent, detailed and accurate coverage of naval warfare.<sup>18</sup> Combat took precedence over convoy<sup>19</sup>, with four more pages demonstrating that Ultra's dominance of naval historiography was alive and well in 1989. Arnold-Forster's 1989 revised companion to World At War, and Ballard's Discovery of the Bismarck, 1990, again demonstrated how little some representations could evolve since 1972. Willmott's Great Crusade: A New Complete History of the Second World War, 1989, peripheralised sea warfare in favour of redefining Axis army effectiveness. Miller's War at Sea and Boyne's Clash of Titans, 1995 were American-centred academic histories, almost entirely battles and Admirals without convoys.<sup>20</sup> By comparison, Sadkovich's outstanding Reevaluating the Major Naval Combatants of WW-II, 1990 contained academic essays resetting or restating important performance elements. Young's Britain's Sea War, 1989, again reviewed existing accounts, while Barnett's Engage the Enemy More Closely, 1991, refreshingly criticised many. Mallmann Showell's U-Boat Command & the Battle of the Atlantic, 1992, stood between national perceptions, outside the Germanic view. Written by two Britons, Kaplan and Currie's Wolfpack (1996) and Convoy (1998), were totally outside it: remarkably comprehensive, balanced, almost academic, combining rare pictures, quotations and artefacts, in a large-format coffee-table style.<sup>21</sup> Still mythically concentrating on sinkings and deaths, there was not the same sense of regret as in German accounts.<sup>22</sup>

Smith's Conflict Over Convoys, 1996, proclaimed a breakthrough in combining diplomatic and operational history about shipping. It actually had little Behrens' classic official work had not in 1954. Smith forcefully argued the conventional American myth. He described the lack of shipping and

<sup>18</sup> Twenty good pages out of 465 overall.

<sup>19</sup> Four pages on *Bismarck*, and two *Scharnhorst* & *Tirpitz* versus one page on Atlantic victory, if very well summed.

<sup>20</sup> Or even logistics.

<sup>21</sup> It features contemporary and consequent artwork, memorials, museum relics, and unremarkable stills from action and film, including *Cruel Sea*, Bogart's *Action In the North Atlantic* and even Hawks' long-forgotten *Corvette K225*.

<sup>22</sup> The 'Regret Publishing' of Buchheim and others.

shipbuilding, and America's importance to continuing Britain's war. America attempted to dominate transport logistics without experience. The US military, a terrible waster of shipping, mistrusted and disliked Britain. Both British and US civilian shipping authorities were less than competent or honest, though Britain's was more effective, due to Great War experience and the worry of possible starvation, which never faced the US.<sup>23</sup> Smith also concentrated on diplomacy to the almost total exclusion of the pressures the campaign generated between Britain and America. He considered concentration on operations blinded most researchers and readers to the truth of the Battle and the war. It depended ultimately on seamen and shipping allocations. He even described anti-submarine warfare as "glitzy wargames".<sup>24</sup> Atlantic anti-submarine warfare was neither glitzy, nor a game, as almost every book overemphasised. Burton's 1994 Rise & Fall of British Shipbuilding by comparison compressed two millennia into three hundred pages, leaving little on purely wartime problems.

Revision of attitudes, change in criticism or presentation was slow. Exploration of myth was absent. Howarth's Men of War, 1992, was instructive when compared to Edwards' wartime collective biography. There had been little revision or reconsideration of significant leaders and personalities.<sup>25</sup> Robertson's 1956 biography covered more, better, than The Fighting Captain published in 1993 by Walker's remaining 'old boys', his senior officers and ratings. This has since been supplemented by their excellent "'Old Boys Association' website" at <http://www.geocities.com/pentagon/4926/index.html>. This includes text, images, and links in addition to details of their creation of a memorial statue to Walker in Liverpool, which was dedicated in 1994. Robertson lacked only the lower-rank contributions of the later book, a defect all books of the early era had. Vause's U-Boat Ace: the Story of Wolfgang Lüth, 1992, while separate from German typology, nevertheless produced little of interest, and no new perceptions. Shean's Corvette & Submarine, 1992, well-researched and written, showed up continuing problems with primary

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pp.86, 138-9, 218-9.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, K, Conflict Over Convoys: Anglo-American Logistics Diplomacy in WW2, Ball State University, Indiana, 1996, p.63.

<sup>25</sup> See Edwards, Men of Action, 1943, for who has changed prominence, Ch.2: "1914-45", this thesis.

sources, while minimising myth.<sup>26</sup> Jackson's autobiography Sailor of Fortune, 1993, excluded his war service without explanation.<sup>27</sup>

Websites and commemorative conferences continued the focus on operations, technology, and experiences. Buckley's "Air Power & the Battle...1939-45" pointed out Coastal Command's low effectiveness before 1943, not its myths.<sup>28</sup> Gallant's "Battle of the Atlantic", and Germinsky's "World War 2 Convoys: the Runs to Russia", (Navy & Marine Corps WW2 Commemorative Committee, 1993), were both early official American netsites. Howarth & Law's 1994 Battle of the Atlantic: the 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary International Naval Conference, gave naval-dominated but thorough coverage from fifty contributors. Shipping was less featured than fighting and weapons, but history and the Battle's consequences were considered. Kessler's paper on French Atlantic U-Boat bases was something of a disappointment, largely concerned with French intelligence and resistance operations, not the activities or experiences of those within the German bases.<sup>29</sup> Scarth's paper on Liverpool contrastingly gave a detailed operational, statistical, and personal account.<sup>30</sup> Even Lane's Merchant Navy article sadly concentrated on experiences, not perceptions or myths, as in his groundbreaking earlier book.<sup>31</sup> Runyan & Copes's (ed) To Die Gallantly: the Atlantic 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary American Conference, 1994 was a little better balanced, including Brazilian contributions, as well as port and Merchant Marine training activities.

Royal Canadian Navy and Air Force history grew. Canada's Merchant Navy received no work at all save some oral history in Salty Dips until 1994's Unknown Navy. It was a quality, footnoted, single volume, semi-official account of wide range, comprehensiveness and force. It had no British, American or Australian equivalent, though their Merchant Navies were much larger, with more problems and incidents to cover. Mythic oral history followed

<sup>26</sup> Major problems were that German and Allied sources were naturally generated separately, and were eyewitness reports by often tired or inexperienced men. Often they were impressions, not substantiated diplomatic documents.

<sup>27</sup> Perhaps aware of the preponderance of wartime experiences, though he left the sea at war's outbreak...

<sup>28</sup> Buckley, J, "Air Power & the Battle...1939-45." Journal of Contemporary History, V.28 N.1, Jan 1993, p.142-62.

<sup>29</sup> Kessler, J "U-Boat Bases in the Bay of Biscay" in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit pp.252-65.

<sup>30</sup> Scarth, A, "Liverpool as HQ & Base" in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit pp.240-51.

<sup>31</sup> See below.

with Parker's Running the Gauntlet: Oral History of Canadian Merchant Seamen, 1994. As leading historian Milner wrote, there was "no major monograph on the Royal Canadian Navy between 1952-85."<sup>32</sup> The official history of the Royal Canadian Air Force appeared in 1986, and a small but steady stream of Canadian Battle works followed. It is a shock that their British equivalents began appearing in the 1950s, not the 1980s. Harbron's fiftieth anniversary focussed Longest Battle: the Royal Canadian Navy in the Atlantic 1939-45, 1993, also gave coverage of shipbuilding, all personnel, especially WRNS, and remembrance, though without mentioning wartime shortcomings. It had the air of being a 'family edition' introduction to the subject.

Milner's comprehensive, clear and very well-written theses, monographs, and books, were the best operational works. These covered the Royal Canadian Navy's beginnings, failures, and their political, personnel and technological causes, without excuses. Milner's paper in Sadkovich contained much interesting historiographic comment on postwar ideas and attitudes, within and without the Royal Canadian Navy, in addition to wartime perception. He condemned MacIntyre's unchanging criticism: the Royal Navy shared many Canadian problems.<sup>33</sup> He considered Chalmers Horton biography "a frontier thesis": "Canadians as rustic cowpokes escorting herds of ships"<sup>34</sup>, and while the Canadians dissect the Battle as do the Germans "with their teutonic flair for thoroughness",<sup>35</sup> "America remains transfixed by the Pacific and Britain too obsessed with 400 years of naval greatness to pay attention to recent events."<sup>36</sup> The 'old' regular Royal Canadian Navy found the campaign uncomfortable, due to its desire for a balanced fleet, and the strikingly poor, understandable but unexplained showing by underequipped, poorly trained reservists and volunteers. Postwar neglect resulted from the unification of Canada's armed services and other national and service traumas of identity and focus.<sup>37</sup>

Academic papers seemed disconnected to a certain extent. Canadian merchant seaman studies such as White's "Hardly Heroes" mentioned Parker

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<sup>32</sup> Milner in Sadkovich op.cit p.45.

<sup>33</sup> For MacIntyre's "Radical Polemic" against the Royal Canadian Navy see Ch.3: "1945-60"; Milner 1994 op.cit, p.259, & MacIntyre's own 1956 op.cit. pp.79-82.

<sup>34</sup> Milner in Sadkovich op.cit, p.45.

<sup>35</sup> Vide Rohwer, Hessler and Rössler.

<sup>36</sup> Milner in Sadkovich op.cit. p.53.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.55-6.

but not Halford. Halley's "Death Was Their Escort" mentioned neither. All seemed to be beginning the subject anew. They contained new information, but not new perspectives, taking their lead very much from existing styles of accounts. White however importantly stated the limitations of oral history, that "we should be cautious about accepting such revelations fifty years after the fact as the final word on the subject."<sup>38</sup> The similarity of what the representations reported all demonstrated the atypicality of seamen's experiences.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless White proved that Canadian were buried among the mass of foreign seamen in Canadian ports, and thus in history. They were also younger, more likely to be married, and outside the landsperson's stereotype of the rough, rootless, hard-drinking seaman.<sup>40</sup> This was hardly surprising, as Canadian shipping was a wartime expedient, not a permanent force. Halley stated that the sensational had tended to dominate representation of seamen, but nevertheless followed this with six pages of action and adventures.<sup>41</sup> Most anecdotes were convoy life and weather rather than enemy action, but they were not the routine and boredom either.<sup>42</sup>

The role of women in the campaign also received attention. Winters' "Wrens of the Second World War" described previous accounts of their service. These had been gender, not military history, dedicated to describing the emancipating effect of naval service, then attacking it.<sup>43</sup> Williams' "Women Ashore" concentrated on their contributions to science. Sexism and parochialism were a necessarily major topic. USN Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service were already largely an educated elite, who contributed both as replacements for men and with original research to American technological development.<sup>44</sup> At war's end "their technical and

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<sup>38</sup> White, J, "Hardly Heroes: Canadian Merchant Seamen & the International Convoy System 1939-45", The Northern Mariner, Vol 5, N.4, October 1995, p.20.

<sup>39</sup> White and Halley contained the same kind of disparate events and experiences as Slader and Hay, the same type of analysis of labour relations and working conditions as Lane, and the same statements that recognition has been inadequate. The homogeneity of reporting style pointed out that seamen's experiences were similar, but not typical.

<sup>40</sup> White 1995 op.cit, p.28-30. White is sadly wrong about better pay rates than Navy servicemen: Halford 1994 op.cit, "The Pay Myth", pp.71-6, 244-6.

<sup>41</sup> Halley, M, "Death Was Their Escort, & Glory Passed Them By", The Northern Mariner, Vol 7, N.1, January 1997, p.45.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.47-52.

<sup>43</sup> Winters, B, "The Wrens of the Second World War: Their Place in the History of Canadian Servicewomen" in Hadley et al 1996, op.cit, pp.281-3.

<sup>44</sup> Williams, K, "Women Ashore: the Contribution of WAVES to US Naval Science & Technology in World War Two", The Northern Mariner, Vol 8, N.2, April 1998, pp.1-16.



scientific prowess was quickly forgotten.”<sup>45</sup> Nowhere more was it ignored than in Ultra.<sup>46</sup> Winters distinguished Canadian navy from army service, particularly regarding rank and pay. Senior female army officers were subordinate to lower male officers. Navy officers were equal, and fully integrated into the service.<sup>47</sup> This was countered by restriction to shore service. Money and employment were the chief reasons behind the enlistment of thousands of women.<sup>48</sup> These works plainly demonstrate that wartime service, despite limitations, did contribute to later though not immediate emancipation of women in the workforce. They also demonstrated that plenty of work remains to be done in this area. With ethnic history it should be the area of attention in the next decade.

Oral history was another rich field. 1992 saw War at Sea: an Oral History, by Smithies (posthumous) with Bruce. It went beyond Gardner's description of oral history as a heady mix of fact, hearsay, opinion, and rumour; “unchecked reminiscence spiced with prejudice”.<sup>49</sup> It bore the marks of hasty and non-academic writing, though unlike Hendrie it blended pre-war scene-setting.<sup>50</sup> It covered the Merchant Navy, shipping and shipyards, the latter an important and hitherto overlooked contribution to the war effort. Previously shipbuilding fell between official accounts. It was not covered operationally by Roskill or logistically by Behrens, but placed with other civilian services in Eldertons' Civilian War Economy. Examined were Maritime Royal Artillery and DEMS, the Marines, Fleet Air Arm, WRNS, RNR and RNVR.<sup>51</sup> Regular Royal Navy myths were pointed out: it remained ‘professional’, keeping the big ships and traditional roles. It was the ‘Wavy Navy’ of the Royal Naval Reserve and Volunteer Reserve who did most of the fighting and dying, especially in the Battle. They became the equals of the regulars who held them in contempt, as Monsarratt's (RNR himself) wartime nonfiction made clear. As Gannon stated, by 1943, Home Fleet captains were trying to get into Western Approaches, as

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.16.

<sup>46</sup> Blair, C, Hitler's U-Boat War: the Hunted, 1942-45, [V.2 of 2], Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, 1998, pp.326, 415.

<sup>47</sup> Winters 1996 op.cit p.283.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p.292-3.

<sup>49</sup> Gardner in Howarth & Law eds op.cit. p.530.

<sup>50</sup> For Hendrie see below.

<sup>51</sup> For DEMS and other abbreviations, see Technical & Idiomatic Terms, pp.6-9.

that was where the action was.<sup>52</sup> There was a final but disappointing chapter on survivors, little on prisoners of war. Nothing was made of Tobermory, WATU, or Bletchley (especially in the chapter on WRNS) where women made their most valuable contribution. Presumably it was still regarded only as a subject for cryptographic, not oral or gender history. The worthwhile element was history from the bottom up, unlike so much naval, merchant, and Battle representation.

Howard Bailey's Battle: the Corvettes and their Crews: an Oral History was solid, with many very good contributors and previously unpublished photos. The occasional lapses into "reminiscence and prejudice" (hardened by a half-century of mental varnishing and recapitulation) which Howard Bailey lacked the background to balance with facts and sources, detracted from its effectiveness and power. The author was more faithful to her contributors than to official and secondary texts. It was more substantial than the American Mason's Atlantic War Remembered, 1990, "surprisingly uncritical" of King, PQ-17 and other bitter points, compared to the Liverpool-based Anthology of Personal Memories, 1993.<sup>53</sup> Wise's 1994 Sole Survivors of the Sea gave more mythic American tales of shipping, attacks, sinkings, losses and deaths. More traditionally-sourced history was provided by Edwards' Dönitz & the Wolfpacks [1996]. Like some earlier works it was an RN/MN account of U-Boat operations, solid but impersonal, subdued in tone but including myth. Stern's Battle Beneath the Waves: the U-Boat Wars 1914-45 [1999], was a thoroughly-sourced operational and technical account of significant U-Boats of both wars, with great accuracy, balance, and restrained style. It still communicated the bravery, fortitude, as well as errors of judgment and character of U-Boat men, and gave an overall picture of the campaign, not merely representative or unrepresentative sorties.

These paled compared to Thomas's Atlantic Star, which came close to being Roskill's successor in writing a large-scale, comprehensive, thorough near-official British history of the Battle.<sup>54</sup> Working from a well-balanced mix of primary, secondary, and oral material (the latter specially requested via the

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<sup>52</sup> Gannon, Michael, Black May: the Defeat of the German Wolfpacks, Harper-Collins, NY, 1998, p.118.

<sup>53</sup> Law in Howarth and Law op.cit p.600.

<sup>54</sup> With footnotes!

press) he redivided the Battle into nine phases from the conventional eight. He unfortunately completely excluded the German experience as well as the US Army Air Force, Coastguard and US Navy. He also excluded almost totally the Royal Canadian Navy, though "it deserves greater mention for its enormous contribution...but to have attempted this would have been at the expense of the British seamen of the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy, and this patently, would not be fair."<sup>55</sup> Thomas divided Phase Five in two: ending it on 31/12/42 and commencing Six on 1/1/43, running until 31/5/43, in order to distinguish the 'losing' era of late 1942 from the 'winning' era of the first half of 1943.<sup>56</sup> This was not accepted as a new theory.<sup>57</sup> Thomas was right to try reorganising the Battle, though his perspective was very British rather than Allied, and ignored the German. To divide late 1942 from early 1943 was still incorrect, as German strategy in the mid-North Atlantic remained unmodified, and Allied operations and losses continued largely unchanged until March 1943, for all the strategic improvements decided earlier in the year, which made possible the permanent swing toward the Allies, in only five weeks, in May 1943.<sup>58</sup> He benefitted markedly from the confluence of oral and text sources.

Slader's second Merchant Navy book, The Fourth Service (1994) presented more mythic 'adventures'; also repeating that the world's Merchant Navies had a unique position between regular combatants and ordinary civilians at risk, as authors had known, and occasionally raised, throughout maritime history. It was and will only be read by ex-seamen, and buffs to whom all this was painfully obvious. Edwards' Merchant Navy Goes to War [1989] and Pearce's Heroes of the Fourth Service [1996] were also of this type, but not of any great distinction. They provided yet more stereotypical events. A Pictorial History of the War at Sea, 1995, was an effective selection of classic and unknown images, where myth and analysis were absent. It appeared to be a collection based on what 'the public' would be familiar with. Anti-submarine warfare was separated from trade and logistics. These were placed behind the coverage of battlefleets, and conventional cruiser and

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<sup>55</sup> This author is astonished and outraged by this statement. Thomas, D, The Atlantic Star, W.H.Allen, London, 1990, introduction.

<sup>56</sup> See Plate 2.2, "Chronology of the Battles of the Atlantic, 1914-18 & 1939-45", of this thesis.

<sup>57</sup> It has not been mentioned or seen in any later general or specific work on the Battle.

<sup>58</sup> The improvements were allocations of Very-Long Range ASW aircraft, Escort-Carriers, and Support Groups.

destroyer operations. There was an entire chapter on midget submarines (hardly vital, however famous they were).<sup>59</sup>

Blair's two massive volumes on Hitler's U-Boat War related the Battle's operational and incidental standpoint largely from the German side. He debunked the "commonly-held" myth that it was a close run thing, of horrendous shipping losses by the U-Boat wonder-weapon which twice almost starved Britain. He regarded this myth as wartime propaganda created by both the Germans and Allies. It was embroidered postwar by official and secondary historians as well as other media, and could not survive statistical scrutiny.<sup>60</sup> Simply showing the 'illusions' and 'realities' ignored the human cost of the Battle. This undermined his concept that the Battle was disproportionally presented, largely by British historians, and required putting in perspective before being laid to rest. Also lost was the meaning of the experiences: why the myths were made. They were intended to cope with danger, death, worry and stress, and postwar pain, loss, trauma and lack of recognition. They were not intended in the main as dispassionately rigorous accounts. Blair pointed out that Americans and Britons saw the Battle differently, but placed American perspective - historical myth - first, rather than acknowledging and balancing both. He was as much a prisoner of American myth as the British are of theirs.<sup>61</sup> He confused wartime anti-submarine warfare perspective with postwar historical attitude.

Gannon's Black May: the Defeat of the German Wolfpacks contained several significant criticisms of Blair. Firstly "King's holding his destroyers from escorting British trade convoys in order to escort US troop convoys" missed the point. "ASW was *the* mission of the moment".<sup>62</sup> Both Gannon and "Padfield questioned why the troops were the emergency."<sup>63</sup> Secondly, Blair contended

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<sup>59</sup> Perhaps the selection was based on the naval photograph exhibits created at the Imperial War Museum for the Anniversary period, not for any specific campaign or view of the war. A more modern, less populist interpretation would give more credit to amphibious and anti-submarine warfare operations.

<sup>60</sup> Blair vol 1, op.cit p.425.

<sup>61</sup> His countermythical fragments could have been more apparent than a page of introduction, and a page or two ending each section, of 800. He also forgets Battle myths are held only by minorities, nowhere as pervasive among historians or the public as ignorance. Contrary to Blair, there has been counter-myth in many mainly recent books, though general impressions have not been reset. Padfield War Beneath the Sea, 1995, Winton Convoy, 1983, Tarrant, U-Boat Wars 1989, Terraine Business In Great Waters, 1990 are all examples.

<sup>62</sup> Gannon 1998 op.cit, p.410-11.

<sup>63</sup> Gannon loc.cit and Padfield, P, War Beneath the Sea, John Murray, London, 1995, p.532 n.61.

that the German attacks on shipping off the US coast were offset by US Navy success in escorting troops. "The argument assumed that King was forced to choose between" escorting troops and merchant shipping, and of the "wrath of the US army should the troops be delayed." Who, knowing anything about him, seriously believes that the gun-metal eyes of King ever blinked at the emotions of the army?"<sup>64</sup> This was however mainly part of the continuing controversy over King's actions, not over the significance of the Battle.

Arctic convoy books still bore striking resemblance thematically and textually to classics like Kola Run. They were not plagiarised or rewritten. The source material was limited, the campaign small compared to the Atlantic, the same naval and merchant ships and men appeared. The major incidents were all dealt with early, leaving little new to include, save more stories of individual seamen. Few events were analysed, merely giving more experiences. Only the universal 'ingredients' defined by Campbell & Macintyre in 1957 were used. The mythic cold, losses, the lethal and U-boat-concealing properties of the sea, official Soviet suspicion amid the welcoming attitudes of ordinary Russians, the system's ingratitude, waste and stupidity, the tremendous pressures put upon the crews, were permanent features. There were apparently no others to be explored. Lambert's "Seizing the Initiative": the Arctic Convoys 1944-45", merely trotted out the 1950's Royal Navy 'offensive' view of operations, supporting wartime Merchant Navy misconceptions that those convoys were always 'bait'.<sup>65</sup> Woodman's 1994 Arctic Convoys, 1941-45 and Kemp's Convoy! Drama In Arctic Waters, 1993, both perpetuated earlier approaches, Woodman adding Merchant Navy experiences to naval action. There was more colour and depth, but no new interpretation.

Beesly's 1990 "Convoy PQ-17: A Study in Intelligence & Decision Making", was most valuable in its discussion of earlier works.<sup>66</sup> He admitted "having done no further research since" 1977, but that Hinsley's Official History judged that Pound had to scatter the convoy, without examining the

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<sup>64</sup> Gannon 1998 op.cit p.412.

<sup>65</sup> Lambert, A, "Seizing the Initiative: the Arctic Convoys 1944-45", in NAM Rodger, op.cit. p.151-62.

<sup>66</sup> Intelligence & National Security, Vol 5 N.2, April 1990, pp.292-322 but mainly 321-2.



alternatives.<sup>67</sup> Roskill's 1957 Official History covered the ground without requiring Ultra. Irving's PQ-17 was a painstaking account, but Irving claimed information from "one or two individuals who were either unwilling or unable to give him" any.<sup>68</sup> McLachlan's Room 39 was "not to be relied on for detail, but excellent for atmosphere."<sup>69</sup> Overall Beesly held that Pound drafted signals which gave a false impression of the situation, and did not fully understand the use of intelligence or defer sufficiently either his operational or intelligence subordinates. Pound did not exercise the alternatives to his actions in the limited searoom available.<sup>70</sup>

Non-mythic technical histories continued in popularity, though thankfully tailing off with Mitchell & Sawyer's Empire Ships, 1990 and Whitley's German Destroyers in WW-II, 1991. Meigs's Sliderules & Submarines, 1990, gave a biased and inadequate history of US technological contributions.<sup>71</sup> Janes Fighting Ships of WW-II, 1989, and Lloyd's War Losses, 1991, reprinted postwar encyclopaedae. Providing endless fascination for the detail-obsessed, with little history amid much hardware modifications, they described ships, but very rarely the men and conditions which played a vital part in seakeeping and fighting qualities. Works like British Cruisers of World War Two narrated even less, restricting fates to table form. Eclipse of the Big Gun covered only the ship types involved. Anti-submarine warfare was combined with minesweeping, behind coastal forces, before amphibious operations. Rather than analysing how submarines and aircraft eclipsed the big gun, it merely placed them as components alongside cruiser and battlefleet warfare. Its radio and technology chapter did not concentrate on Ultra and ECM, at least: radar and SONAR were important but Ultra was not vital.<sup>72</sup> It pointed out (without centralising it) how the *use* of improved ASDIC and depthcharges, teamwork, escort groups, escort-carriers and very-long-range aircraft, all

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p.321. The alternatives were Tovey [CinC Home Fleet] to steam toward PQ-17 while ordering it to reverse course toward him, bringing it and any advancing German force under his air cover, especially to threaten *Tirpitz*, which the German command would not countenance. The convoy would then have had to face only the air and U-Boat forces PQ-18 was fought through in September of that year.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p.322.

<sup>69</sup> Loc.cit. Quite the impression this author gained. Atmosphere is often lacking in naval narratives, Ludovic Kennedy being a strong exponent of the value of including it.

<sup>70</sup> This could serve as a long-term, balanced epitaph to the man and the disaster.

<sup>71</sup> He neither assessed British influence of US ASW, nor examined anti-submarine operations. Zimmerman in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit p.477.

<sup>72</sup> A post-Ultra work, as Gardner described in Howarth & Law op.cit pp.528 & 532.

turned the Battle's tide.<sup>73</sup> Eclipse was very much a technical summary with very little basing of these in chronology or history, though some attempt was made to integrate technology with tactics and the fighting which produced the requirements for new systems and hardware.

Criticisms of purely technical history could at last be found by the late 1990s. "A recent review criticised Warship 1996 for being a sort of 'Beezer Book For Boys over 35', dealing with what the reviewer dismissed as a 'rag-bag of mainly technical descriptions of long-dead warships.' That is an unavoidable drawback of a publication dedicated to warship history."<sup>74</sup> It need not have been unavoidable. History is more than designs and construction. The result was that the rich analytical narrative of these accounts was restricted to technology, not operations or experiences. No work gave the same depth or coverage to the lives of the ships or their crews.<sup>75</sup> Grove and Ireland's Janes War At Sea: 1898-1997 [Harper-Collins, NY, 1997] showed for the first time the difference between operational reality and both prewar expectations and postwar concentration on big ships and battles. Chapter six began with battleships and interwar construction. Chapter seven began with the Battle of the Atlantic, continued with the submarine war against Japan, amphibious operations and aviation, and lastly capital ship operations. This indicated the general trend toward more balanced representation.

Milner and Zimmerman lamented that technical history was still trapped in mere description. There was no technical history of the Battle, or Radar, ASDIC, HF/DF's impact, or analysis of how technology changed sea warfare and anti-submarine warfare (the Shock Of The New, as it were). Anniversary Conference delegate David Zimmerman, himself a technical historian, deplored the lack of such a history.<sup>76</sup> This was also made by Milner, who did more than anyone to highlight the Royal Canadian Navy's invisibility from history and to lead the blossoming of this new area of scholarship.<sup>77</sup> It was not

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<sup>73</sup> Other interesting comment: IC in ASDIC doesn't mean "Investig. Cttee", but does not say from whence it was derived.

<sup>74</sup> Mclean, D, in the editorial to Warship 1997-98, Conway Maritime Press, London, 1997, p.7.

<sup>75</sup> Only immediately-postwar mythic, sanitised books such as The King's Cruisers [1947] had told such stories, which were clearly outdated by the turn of the century.

<sup>76</sup> "The task the conference organisers have set me is impossible. Without an understanding of the technology or the tactics employed, no history of their relationship is possible." His chapter was an outline of the future direction of research. Zimmerman in Howarth & Law eds op.cit pp.476-7 & 489.

<sup>77</sup> Milner in Sadkovich op.cit p.55, & footnote 53, on p.60.

new history, nor radical, but it was an area previously neglected. Ironically one indication of the direction new technical accounts could go in was provided by DK Brown in the same 50th Anniversary Conference proceedings. His "Atlantic Escorts, 1939-45" discussed more than the technical aspects of ship, weapon and sensor development. He also included more subjective parameters such as the effect upon tactics and fighting ability of ship size, hull forms, damage control, accommodation and facilities, and even ship's motion and motion sickness.<sup>78</sup> When synthesised with Zimmerman's conference paper and monographs, Buxton's "British Warship Building and Repair"<sup>79</sup>, Watt's 1976 U-Boat Hunters, and other such sources, a more comprehensible picture of the relationship of technology and tactics begins to emerge. A single scholarly monograph is still required to integrate these with manpower, recruitment, bases, training, and service perceptions, on both sides of the Battle.

Hendrie's Short Sunderland in WW2, 1994, was a technical history masquerading as an operational one, not a patch on Longmate's equally brief Search Find & Kill, which had more technical material, and better operational history.<sup>80</sup> Moving beyond technical history was Kahn's clear scholarly 1991 Seizing the Enigma. Gardner called this story of Allied cryptology, and the race to break the U-Boat codes especially, the "first post-Ultra work".<sup>81</sup> Kahn stated "cryptology was the chief *secret* factor in winning the Battle", emphasising the importance of Bletchley over US operations. The latter tended to overshadow due to their scale and size in some recent works - especially, inevitably, on the Net.<sup>82</sup> The US provided listening stations, and the required mass-production of complicated technology the British no longer could: all the breakthrough were either prewar in Poland or Bletchley. It depicts great troubles and difficulties, personalities at sea and on land, pointing out Ultra was not the most important factor, or only important factor, or even necessary! Only shipping and escorts (and air support one assumes...) were vital.

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<sup>78</sup> Brown, DK, "Atlantic Escorts 1939-45", in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit pp.452-75.

<sup>79</sup> Buxton, L, "British Warship Building and Repair" in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit pp.80-100.

<sup>80</sup> Every U-Boat sunk by RAF Coastal Command was described.

<sup>81</sup> Gardner in Howarth & Law op.cit pp.528 & 532 & Note 36 of the current chapter.

<sup>82</sup> Kahn, D, Seizing The Enigma, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1991, p.276. For American dominance of Ultra on the Net see Russell, J, "Ultra...Against the U-Boats in WWII", <http://omni.cc.purdue.edu/~pha/ultra/navy-1.html>.

Recalcitrantly reactionary books like Salvo! continued from both 'Allied' and German authors, focussing on rare uses of guns, not torpedoes, sensors or aircraft.<sup>83</sup> This was the modern equivalent of the interwar focus on superdreadnoughts, and the wartime unwillingness to focus on escorts, sensors and trained personnel. The reality was blockade, convoy escort and ASW. Neither Deighton's "Sand & Sea"<sup>84</sup>, Chambers & Culbert's WW-II Films & history, 1996 nor Ramsden's "Refocussing 'The People's War'" explored myth.<sup>85</sup> Experience as myth remained implicit. James's Fame in the 20<sup>TH</sup> Century, 1990, in coffee-table companion and enhanced paperback discussion, analysed celebrity, cutting through civilian myths, at least. Paris's 1990 Novels of World War Two showed little change in portrayal or quality.<sup>86</sup>

Winton's Convoy, 1990, took apart its entire history, not merely one or both Battles. It and Terraine's marvellous Business in Great Waters are the "distinguished historians definitive account of submarine war", post-Ultra Roskills concentrating on the Atlantic. Unlike Padfield's War Beneath the Sea, they gave a balanced considered account of the entire Atlantic struggle, as well as beginnings, technologies and logistics. Padfield's history admittedly was only of Second World War submarine operations, but dealt very cursorily with development and Great War operations which in so many ways defined what its sequel would be like.<sup>87</sup> Terraine explained Royal Canadian Navy problems, benefitting openly from Milner. He continually provided the context of what was happening elsewhere, how the Battle and the war interacted. Either "Bomber Command was irrelevant to the war or the war was irrelevant to it."<sup>88</sup> 1941 was the key year. Padfield pilloried King and the unrestrained Churchill for the Atlantic's losses and dangers.<sup>89</sup> He mentioned but didn't condemn the Royal Canadian Navy, nor its contributions. He considered radar the chief Allied deliverance, against much of his evidence and the general conception, well set by 1995. There were half a dozen chief factors. Bombers were more use on

<sup>83</sup> Edwards, B, Salvo! A history of Classic Naval Gun Actions, Arms & Armour Press, London, 1995.

<sup>84</sup> Deighton, L, "Lawrence of Arabia vs The Cruel Sea" in Sight & Sound, Vol.5, No.1, Jan 1995, pp.30-33.

<sup>85</sup> Ramsden 1998 op.cit, pp.35-63, 1998.

<sup>86</sup> Paris 1990 op.cit, introduction.

<sup>87</sup> See Ch.2: "1914-45.", of this thesis.

<sup>88</sup> Terraine 1990 op.cit p.355, on how Bomber Command kept long-range aircraft needed for the Atlantic over Germany.

<sup>89</sup> As Blair [1997] showed, this is insufficient: King was no Anglophobe, merely too pro-US Navy and anti-everyone else.

patrol than bombing Germany, but Padfield surprisingly claimed escorts a better investment than mass-produced merchant vessels.<sup>90</sup> van der Vat's Stealth at Sea: the Submarine, 1994, was another, less comprehensive, but as mythic as his 1988 work.

Of all the recent books, Steele's 1995 Tragedy of HMS Dasher was perhaps the most significant, not only in that it brought to light an accidental loss largely forgotten since 1943<sup>91</sup>, but also in that it was intended as an Anniversary memorial piece. Wartime and postwar official secrecy and disinterest denied relatives the chance to grieve for half a century. Hundreds met or were reunited and shared their loss, what could be achieved quickly with the force and power of memory where a neglected story "needed to be told." The differences between 'Official' and 'Unofficial' mourning and memorialisation stood out. Official Memorialisation would be better planned and covered, if no better funded.<sup>92</sup> It might be less than the survivors and relatives wanted, misplaced or misdirected, or a poor compromise between feuding departments and Government ministries.<sup>93</sup> Unofficial memorials, supported by private donations and contributions, can be free of any but local government regulations, in whatever form survivors or relatives desire or can afford. Unfortunately unofficial memorials are also restricted to the involved or related, as *Dasher's* services at Ardrossan showed. The MoD laid on helicopters for an emotional flyby but no Ministry personnel. Official events get official support and participation, which mean more brass and more profile. In this case that may have been contrary to the aim of the memorial, as those involved lacked any previous official apology or recognition of grief and trauma.

What was most obvious was how easily things can be forgotten. It is difficult to generate remembrance, save with official backing, or among tiny groups of interested persons. Steele was "a local man" who remembered the loss as a boy. He drew on contemporary and current testimony from survivors

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<sup>90</sup> Padfield 1995 op.cit, p.276.

<sup>91</sup> Wartime secrecy till VE Day, the 30-Year Rule, then the silence of relatives' ignorance and official disinterest.

<sup>92</sup> Vide attempts by the Merchant Navy War Service League in Australia to achieve equal recognition, once equal recompense was gained for sacrifice and service in both Wars.

<sup>93</sup> Or even a political football.



and relatives, many of whom had no idea how their loved ones died till the MoD released information following his investigations, and a subsequent appeal. The fundraising for the memorial, the plaque, and a church plate in Ardrossan took only seven months to develop, organise, plan, and raise. The book was written with survivors and relatives in mind, as both focus and audience, and it did not place *Dasher* in a Battle context nor avoid mistakes a naval historian would see.

The world of U-Boat myth before Buchheim was divided, like Germany, into participants and nonparticipants, those who served and those born after.<sup>94</sup> After Buchheim there was little communication between two vigorously separate camps, one supporting, one opposing, blindly setting out their viewpoints. With myths and ideas outside Germany it was less so. PQ-17 and the policies of Admiral King were the only areas of division. There was no Nazi past to make allowances for, escape, or be proud of. The lessons and warnings of militarism and blind service to the state Hadley described were less forceful outside Germany. He did not explore the ghost-written nature of wartime propaganda. He must have read van der Vat's humorous account of Weyher's Prien in Howarth's Men of War.<sup>95</sup> He did not explore the separations between the actual and official authors, or reactions. Nor did Hadley explore German academic operational histories. Since the mid-1960s Rohwer and Rössler ignored mythology and removed misconception, giving a better view of U-Boat operations and the German Battle than we have of their Allied equivalents.<sup>96</sup> There was a scholarly solidity and thoroughness which gave these works, whether purely technical, or experiential and operational, a sophistication, quality and accuracy not bettered in Britain or America. They were as popular internationally as in Germany.<sup>97</sup> Their lack of cultural meaning, their accurate counter-mythology opposed the extremes of the debate. They were less open to personal and media reinterpretation and/or misuse, less valued by the public, less close to its heart, and less useful as tools of memory and meaning, mourning and mythology.

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<sup>94</sup> "The grace of late birth", Hadley op.cit p.172-3.

<sup>95</sup> See Ch.3: "1945-60".

<sup>96</sup> Rohwer is probably the single most accomplished and sophisticated Battle historian in any country of any era.

<sup>97</sup> In that they were as frequently quoted, used, and referred to by later writers.

Many German writings represented an inability to mourn, grow and move on from experience. Mythologisation could do both, especially if carefully considered and guided. Remythologisation could give much help in comprehending experience, provided it was based in fact and that bias and prejudice were clearly identified and analysed. In Germany myth revolved attitudes. People often looked forward to forget, not to relive or rethink the past. A similar desire to forget and move on seemed to characterise many responses to the recent anniversaries of reunification. Germans have put both behind them.<sup>98</sup> Left and Right politics determined the debate, froze progress and limited space for other opinions.<sup>99</sup> Only former U-Boat commander Topp's 1991 Flares Over the Atlantic reflected in a new, enlightened and progressive way. Unlike Buchheim he did not self-promote, nor like Werner exaggerate, and as a result criticism was more muted, and less permanent.<sup>100</sup> Hadley exposed other 'myths', not only of the men and the machines, but of maritime writing itself: the 'clean sea' mentioned by Monsarrat.<sup>101</sup> U-Boats and the Battle still had appeal, and not just for former participants. The young, and others, brought up in and steeped in lore and myth, perpetuated the themes, icons, traditions, and memorabilia. Attacks on duty and heroism continued, as did attacks on change and growth. The "Godforsakenness of U-Boat warfare" could equally be applied to all involved in the Battle.<sup>102</sup>

The beginning of new counter-mythical scholarly analyses emerging by the late 1990s was Mulligan's Neither Sharks Nor Wolves.<sup>103</sup> He explored beyond the mythic stereotypes in representations, eventually conducting interviews with survivors as well as comparing documents. Like Lane, he broke new ground in creating a well-researched, scientific study, not a compilation of oral testimony.<sup>104</sup> This subject profited from sociological surveying the way Lane's analysis of seamen did. Losses and conscription changed the U-Waffe from an elite force to a more typical wartime mix of

<sup>98</sup> Seen chiefly in TV documentaries: Fall of the Wall, Germany: the Reluctant Nation, The Iron Curtain, The Pink Triangle, The Wall.

<sup>99</sup> Hadley op.cit p.178-9.

<sup>100</sup> Topp 1992 op.cit, pp.150-1, 166-7.

<sup>101</sup> Monsarrat, N, 1976 op.cit, p.6: "We were sailing peacefully over ground strewn with dead sailors, blown up, burned to death, shredded, sucked down...just under the keel...the sea seemed poisoned for ever."

<sup>102</sup> Bitdorff, W, "Making Das Boot" cited in Hadley op.cit p.151.

<sup>103</sup> Mulligan 1999 op.cit.

seamen, sailors and conscripts.<sup>105</sup> Mulligan proved this did not lower performance, nor the public perception of the men, or their special treatment. He also analysed the roles and styles of Dönitz, von Friedeberg, their staffs, and personnel policy. Both the depth and rigour of the analysis and the approach made it a dramatic departure from preceding accounts. The U-Boat war was neither a 'children's crusade' [though losses reduced the average age of all combatants], nor a cruel campaign fought by emotionless seasoned professionals. This study did much to bridge both the national sides of the mythology, and the controversy surrounding its representations. Germans could now see that the campaign lay between the emotive extremes of left 'victim' and right 'hero'. Former Allies and researchers could now see past the old stereotypes of pirate and Nazi automaton. Hadley re-evaluated U-Boat myth for English speakers. Mulligan placed the service itself on a solid statistical and demographic base. He stripped it of the misconception, lack of knowledge and dissection which made earlier writers view existing accounts in purely stereotypical terms. Ironically, as with Robertson, Griffin and Hadley, this new groundbreaking work on the U-Boat was written by a foreigner. As with research on women and ethnicity, it will bear fruit in years to come.

Lane's Merchant Seaman's War was written about the sociology of wartime seamen, their world and experiences, and the print, newsreel, feature and fiction written during the war for propaganda purposes. Its counter-mythic, exploratory themes largely escaped notice.<sup>106</sup> What people thought about themselves was told, as were the reactions the Battle provoked. Class, race, and political awareness were analysed amidst status, geography, mores, and values. Many such questions had never been raised before. Other recent representations complained of lack of postwar recognition, the poor state of wages and conditions, but went no further; to explore more of the seaman's world, beyond the limited physical sense. There was no comparison to other seamen, or other times. There was no connection or comparison to land workers. Writers seemed content to keep seamen mysterious and mystical even when the writers were themselves ex-participants. They understood

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<sup>104</sup> Mulligan even provided a sample questionnaire and bias/response formulae in an appendix. This demonstrated how thorough and how individual the study was.

<sup>105</sup> Although the Kriegsmarine at large did not consider them an elite prewar.

<sup>106</sup> Lane appeared in references elsewhere as a source of information, not a source of ideas or approach.

each other, but excluded landspeople; only allowing a view into their world. The writers were close to their subject, but their audience was not allowed to be. There was no interpretational leap into new territory for the Battle, as Isaac re-imagined eighteenth century Virginia, or Denning did the *Bounty* Mutiny.<sup>107</sup> There was no benchmark for new history. The proximity of the events did not lend the Battle to such reimagining. Damage to memory and imagination by non-press media compounded this. Wartime seamen could not be described as Rediker did, nor would they accept complex or pretentious reimaginings.<sup>108</sup> There had to be more, however, to these stories than hyperbole, mere narration of experiences, or analysis of tonnage.

Atlantic fiction declined into serialisation and repetition. New authors, like Forrester before them, mixed Napoleonic, Great War, Second World War, and postwar tales. Almost all were ex-servicemen. McCutchan, a former captain, created miraculously-surviving characters: Commodore Kemp, Lt.Cameron RNVR. AE Langsford, a woman born in 1959, was the single exception in gender. Her work was indistinguishable. There was no early MacLean, or Monsarrat. All were clearly aware of what a 'good' novel required: a catchy beginning; solid, plausible dialogue and action, a convincing and effective plot, diverse and balanced characters for the reader to identify and be involved with<sup>109</sup>, and a buildup to an exciting, physically and (hopefully) morally and emotionally-challenging climax, finishing with a clear tying-up of loose ends. This also left openings for elements to base sequels on. Readers received the reassurance of recognisable, familiar character types, situations, and predictable plots. Given that McCutchan, for instance, understood this and was capable of producing such competent, commercially-satisfying works, why were the books limited, inaccurate, episodic, formulaic and boring? The authors were wedded to commercial requirements. They totally understood the format. They seemed unable to move beyond or even outside those limits. Unlike Capt. W.E.Johns (of Biggles fame), McCutchan, Reeman *et al* were writing for an adult audience as old as themselves.

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<sup>107</sup> Isaac, R, *The Transformation of Virginia*, Norton, NY, 1987; Denning, G, *Mr.Bligh's Bad Language*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1992; *An Ethnographic History of the Bounty*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988.

<sup>108</sup> *Between the Devil & the Deep Blue Sea*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987.

<sup>109</sup> So absent in porn and horror, where the plot is a thin hasty idea to stitch together visual scenes.

How much they satisfied remained uncertain. Given the popularity of twentieth-century commercial fiction they were probably as valued as other genres.<sup>110</sup> The Atlantic's lack of cultural penetration was indicated by the low overall numbers of novels set there compared to other theatres. Equally noticeable was the very low frequency of maritime stories among war comics.<sup>111</sup> Perhaps as little as one in 30 or 40 involved warships, even fewer seamen or convoying. Combat remained the thing. The only developments were the sex in the relationships, the violence of the combat.<sup>112</sup> None challenged their readers. "The serious novel seems pretty much dead" stated American cultural guru Gore Vidal, "and partly because great literature requires great readers as well as great writers."<sup>113</sup> Serial naval fiction already existed, but was clearly 'pulp'.<sup>114</sup> The Anniversary period did not raise interest. McCutchan *et al* were already present. The Battle was buried under more famous events. The general focus on anniversaries led older men to seek new fictions reliving those times. Other genres - especially crime and western, which leant themselves to characters having adventure after adventure - used this format for decades. It is not known why such adventures took so long to be grafted onto a Battle setting. McCutchan was not pulp: hardcover editions were as well printed on good paper, bound and jacketed, as any modern commercial novel, and distinctly better than their equivalents in earlier decades. Some percentage of sales was library editions, where old men could get attached to characters and themes without purchasing relatively expensive single volumes.<sup>115</sup>

McCutchan's Commodore Kemp series exemplified repetitive Battle fiction. This series replicated a set of events and myths from novel to novel, only the principal character remaining. From 1986 this ex-Royal Navy officer produced tales of minimal variation of the war service of a recalled, retired Admiral. These novels were devoid of the animated, emotional description of 'noble bows pointing upwards in salute' characteristic of earlier periods.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Westerns, Conan, Mills and Boon, or the violent desperate combat novels of Kessler or Hassel.

<sup>111</sup> Commando Magazine and War Picture Library, an apparently (thankfully) dying genre.

<sup>112</sup> Mirrored by the slowly-growing sexual explicitness of romance novelettes like Mills & Boon.

<sup>113</sup> Gore Vidal, "Gore Vidal" op.cit.

<sup>114</sup> Such as J.E Macdonnell, who wrote dozens of cheaply printed and bound novellas about submarines, ASW, shipping and surface combatants, in all theatres, between 1950 and 1970.

<sup>115</sup> Publishers consulted refused to elaborate.

<sup>116</sup> Such as Callison's Bone Collectors, 1984; commented on by Lane op.cit 1990, p.238.



McCutchan's novels were devoid of feeling, their characters as restrained as description. Full-blown mythic content was the order of the day, some of it Merchant Navy, but mainly Royal Navy myth of seamen and Germans. Convoys were used as decoys.<sup>117</sup> U-Boats attacked and sunk were considered more valuable than ships defended.<sup>118</sup> In each novel there were a cast of similar Merchant Navy characters: alcoholics, the perennially sexually-dysfunctional. In Convoy East, 1989, there were WRNS aboard to complicate social interaction. Shipping losses were always high, as were losses of seamen. U-Boat losses were also high; twelve round one convoy in 1940<sup>119</sup>, three round another,<sup>120</sup> a U-Boat and two enemy destroyers sunk attacking an early arctic convoy in late 1941).<sup>121</sup> North also had a captured German secret agent (a friend of the captain) to pick up off Norway and deliver to the USSR. The Russians discharged ships faster than the British<sup>122</sup>, something that would surprise many who steamed to Murmansk more than once.<sup>123</sup>

Convoys were scattered monotonously regularly, in nearly every novel.<sup>124</sup> There were only two scatterings in history.<sup>125</sup> In Battle fiction, 1945-2000, HMS Ulysses to Convoy Homeward, scattering was *de rigeur*, the ultimate act of fatalistic resignation. McCutchan's other episodic novel series, Lt.Cameron RNVR, showed Royal Navy life in the same way: bad Captains, the usual gang of Hostilities-Only reprobates. The usual leading-seamen's 3 good-conduct badges which meant "12 Years undetected Crime", first seen fictionally in HMS Ulysses in 1955.<sup>126</sup> "Anti-submarine warfare escorts had priority over cruisers for radar."<sup>127</sup> This was myth pure and simple: deception and mangling of real experiences for dramatic purpose. These novels were written by participants who perhaps ought to have known better.

<sup>117</sup> McCutchan, P, Convoy Commodore, 1986.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p.27.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid; in reality 20 U-Boats were sunk worldwide in the whole of 1940...Costello & Hughes 1977, op.cit p.328.

<sup>120</sup> Homeward, 1992.

<sup>121</sup> North, 1987.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p.85.

<sup>123</sup> Woodman 1994 op.cit, p.182-3.

<sup>124</sup> In his 1986, 1987, 1989 novels.

<sup>125</sup> HX-84 under direct attack by raider *Scheer*, PQ-17 equally famously, by Pound's error of judgement and drafting.

<sup>126</sup> McCutchan, P, Lt.Cameron RNVR, p.29.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p.13.

In 1998 there was another fiftieth anniversary. The Cruel Sea was finished in 1948 and to commemorate this the BBC commissioned a three-hour radio dramatisation. Continuity and change were prominent. Donald Sinden (Lt. Lockhart in the 1953 film) was in this version. He played the kind of pompous, omniscient narrator both novel and film did not have, lending the radio version a mythic gravitas its predecessors did not require. In this version, as in the novel, Julie Hallam, the 'First Lieutenant's woman', died accidentally. Naturally sound effects of waves, ASDIC and depthcharges evoked the cinema edition. The original music from the film was also used, connecting it even more to past representations. These versions of The Cruel Sea are interwoven and interdependent, not oppositional or revisionist. They are variations on the same representation. They are more like the evolution of Das Boot than reworkings, new insights into the original, or new editions for a later era.

Cinematically released internationally 1997-8, the Director's Cut of Das Boot perpetuated controversy over Buchheim's perspective of the U-Boat's portrayal. As usual with Director's Cuts, the director said "this is the Das Boot I always wanted to make."<sup>128</sup> Full, restored, it lacked the exciting actions to which all war films, and even most anti-war films, helplessly reverted. A longer, slower, film, with more tension and stress, and less action, meant less time attacking convoys. Only three ships were sunk, during the early centre of the film, thus lowering focus on the Battle as the reason for the U-Boat being at sea. A new opening scene and a few short scenes were added; the remainder of the extra 1h19min added to existing scenes, deepening the film's existing tension and power. In addition to sunsets and the occasional beauty of the Atlantic, the viewer was taken further into the crew's lives and relationships.<sup>129</sup> It was no longer an anti-war film masquerading as an action movie. It was at last a balance between the under-length, mis-promoted and distorted standard screen and video version, and the full TV miniseries rarely seen outside

<sup>128</sup> Petersen, in the 6-minute "Behind the Scenes" featurette of the wide-screen video release.

<sup>129</sup> Several added key scenes show men dressed as dancing girls celebrating the news that they are returning [almost empty handed] to base, to be depressed by news, not of a military disaster, but their soccer team's defeat. In Spain, during replenishment before the climactic Gibraltar-penetration, the Chief Engineer, and war correspondent Lt. Werner both learn they will not be leaving *U-96* in Spain, which seals their fate. From Petersen's Director's Cut, Columbia, 1997.

Germany. It has most of the scale, impact and claustrophobia the length and depth of the miniseries brought. It could not alleviate the basic problems of accuracy and attitude encoded in the original film and in the novel. These could not be improved with extra footage, restored prints, or sound. The depth-charges still burst too close and too deep for realism. Character's opinions were still controversial. The climactic air-raid was still implausible: more realism could have been made with *U-96* succumbing to air attack outside the port instead, within sight of home, not the wholly unlikely strafing.<sup>130</sup> No new version could change this: audio could be restored, new sound effects added, but no new footage could be shot.

As with the promotional materials for the 1987 German counter-mythical reconstructionist documentary Against England, the advertising undermined and subverted the filmmaker's intentions. It turned what should be a piece of serious, thoughtful drama into 'yet another sub movie'.<sup>131</sup> Both advertising and 'making-of' featurette accentuated action and violence, not tension and drama. Trailers contained every explosion in the film, its editing compressed all the looks of fear and worry between them. Trailer music was from the 1989 movie of a very successful Clancy cold-war submarine novel, The Hunt For Red October, containing the Soviet National Anthem....this supreme piece of farce was added to a typically gravel-voiced hyperbolic narration.<sup>132</sup> If not mere action, like new video dramas, it was advertised to the wrong audience. The six-minute 'making-of' featurette, promoted typically as having "never-before-seen behind-the-scenes footage and interviews", contained footage from the original 45min 1981 German documentary. The hydraulically-controlled U-boat-set, shots of the actors entering, and the backdrops against which the conning-tower set was deluged, were featured. These were combined with shots of the sound effects being rerecorded and remixed, and present-day soundbytes (not interviews) from director Wolfgang Petersen and lead actor

<sup>130</sup> In the novel another U-Boat was sunk outside the port as *U-96* returned. This was another incident from 1944, not from the late 1941 the remainder of the novel was set in. Blair vol.2, p.609.

<sup>131</sup> Like the imitative Cold-War period submarine-claustrophobia dramas Crimson Tide and Hostile Waters 1 & 2.

<sup>132</sup> The most recent descendent of Lorne Greene's narration of the 1940 RCN documentary Atlantic Patrol. From the cinematic trailer and Behind-the-scenes featurette included in the video release.

Jurgen Prochnow.<sup>133</sup> Only the Cut's producer, Ortwin Freyermuth, was interviewed, extolling its - his - improvements.

The German controversy and interest were absent, as were why the Cut was made. Such undertakings are expensive and their purpose commercial. It was never, no matter what the makers say, simply a case of "it felt like time to do it." Clearly Columbia and BavariaFilm thought there would be a market of raised interest after the Anniversary era. Perhaps they also wanted to take advantage of The Hunt For Red October.<sup>134</sup> Clearly Petersen's recent success with semi-dramatic action pieces like Outbreak and Air Force One indicated he was popular and highly considered among executives. This made it easier to pitch an non-commercial representation like a restored, 3h20min subtitled German-language anti-war submarine drama.

Evidence of the Battle's limited cultural penetration outside Germany was given by the 1994 film An Awfully Big Adventure, from Bainbridge's 1989 novel.<sup>135</sup> A city more than any other affected by the Battle, Liverpool became one of the two great British Battle terminals after the near-closure and restriction caused by German mines, *S-Boats* and air-raids on East coast towns and routes.<sup>136</sup> In February 1941 Liverpool became the base of Western Approaches Command, which was (under Adm.Noble and then ex-submariner Adm.Horton), to win the Battle and thus the war, for the Allies. Like the Clyde, convoys and escorts came and went, but from Liverpool WAC directed the campaign. Other Liverpool films of recent years make no such references.<sup>137</sup> Famous 'Merseybeat' representations were a 1960s creation: affluent, forward looking, without war on the mind. The Battle was only inescapable to older people. It was peripheral to Bainbridge, but central to Liverpool's experience of war, as Deighton put it, comparing The Cruel Sea to Lawrence of Arabia.<sup>138</sup> "Few moviegoers had met T.E.Lawrence, but all knew some bank-clerk or milkman

<sup>133</sup> He was English-speaking, and known, from Beverly Hills Cop 2 and many action-video releases.

<sup>134</sup> As well as the imitative submarine-claustrophobia action video dramas mentioned above.

<sup>135</sup> In 1947 Liverpool, Stella gets work backstage in a theatre, then becomes the lover of an actor, who had, as RNVR [a civilian, not a seaman], left the stage in 1940 to command a corvette, as Cruel Sea's Ericson & Monsarrat had before him. He realises Stella is his daughter, but is killed accidentally before taking any action; from the novel & film.

<sup>136</sup> Liverpool handled 13,000 ships [120million tons] per year 1939-45; & 4.7million troops. Burn, A, The Fighting Captain, L.Cooper, London, 1993, pp.54, 58-9. See also Scarth "Liverpool as HQ & Base" in Howarth & Law 1994 op.cit, pp.240-251.

<sup>137</sup> BBC/Film-4's Dancing Through the Dark, 1991, for instance.

<sup>138</sup> Deighton, L, "Sand and Sea" vol 5 #1, Jan.1995, p.30-33.

who had gone off to man some warship equipped with no more than pluck, purpose and patriotism."<sup>139</sup> Bainbridge, once again, provided a received myth of the Battle. George, the prop master,

"joined the Merchant Navy. Two years later his ship was torpedoed 24hrs out of Trinidad. He spent 9 days adrift in an open boat [the boat is *always* open, just as it was in The Goons...] croaking out xmas carols and spitting up oil. Stella was used to such stories. Every man she had met told tales of escape and heroism and immersion...down in submarines, stolen through frontiers, limped home across the channel on a wing and a prayer."<sup>140</sup>

The Battle, the city, and their effects on each another, were better executed in film than novel. More peripheral material has since been released. U-571 is currently screening. Early advertising indicated "Michael McConaughey leads a group of soldiers in Italy to recover an Enigma machine 'hidden' somewhere aboard a U-Boat."<sup>141</sup> Eventually it was set in the Atlantic, a navy not an army story, and a traditional action movie rather than a historical film. It remained about Enigma (a secret mission to recover secret enemy technology).<sup>142</sup> It is based on the actual capture of *U-571* by the British, and had advice and historical accuracy added after ex-participant's protests.<sup>143</sup> None of this prevented the director from denouncing U-Boat men as Nazis "for only dedicated Nazis would have put up with what they went through", or the needless and inaccurate portrayal of the U-Boat crew machine-gunning seamen in a lifeboat in order to keep the damaged U-Boats' location a secret.<sup>144</sup>

Anniversary documentaries were more prolific, not otherwise beneficial. Awareness was raised by these particular, specific works, but served only as backdrop to other issues and experiences. Seamen, black Americans, leaders, and cryptology were the focus of these little-seen short-lived TV works. While this needed doing and also had links to 1950s Battle cinema and 1970s histories, spreading the 'now it can be told' genre across media types, the Battle was incidental to these men and their experiences. Compilation

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, p.33.

<sup>140</sup> Bainbridge, B, An Awfully Big Adventure, Duckworth, London, 1989, p.39-40.

<sup>141</sup> Michael Douglas pulled out due to other commitments; Neon Magazine, October 1998, p.27.

<sup>142</sup> This is perhaps an indication of how far behind cinema is: history having moved beyond Ultra-domination.

<sup>143</sup> Helgason's U-Boat Website featured details of this controversy, and pictures of the sets and full-scale U-Boat props.

<sup>144</sup> Jonathon Mostow, director, quoted in the Washington Post, 23-4-00. Other information from the movie, & from Tonya Allen, pers.comm, of [www.U-boat.net](http://www.U-boat.net), and her review of U-571 at [www.uboot.net/special/movies/u571\\_review.html](http://www.uboot.net/special/movies/u571_review.html).



editions, such as the American Atlantic War, combining dramatic footage (not always balanced with oral recollections), were becoming vogue in all forms of war documentary, as it was with motor-racing crashes and other 'sports'.<sup>145</sup> With a preponderance of wartime footage and the ease of combining any conceivable group of images, 'best-of', 'naval video time capsules' were inevitable.<sup>146</sup> What must be emphasised is that they were merely compilations of imagery, some with original sound, not analytical or narrative documentary.<sup>147</sup> Analysis was incidental. Documentaries only established events, without exploring myths. Indeed 1994's "Dönitz" was promoting the pro-Buchheim, left-wing, anti-participant myth. This added another voice to the pro-and-anti-Buchheim debate: it was not a new perspective or interpretation.<sup>148</sup> No-one provided the middle ground, despite the best efforts of the interviewees to be fair or at least balanced. In Germany, for the U-Boat and Dönitz, there was none.

No doubt intended to capitalise on raised awareness among all the other commemorations of the Anniversary period, October Films and Lionheart TV made Forgotten Heroes for BBC broadcast in 1994. The only documentary since the war to deal solely with seamen, it had a representative sample of nationalities: British (less than 70% white), US, Canadian, Indian, Norwegian. Ordinary seamen were its only advantage over "Wolfpack"'s wholly white British ex-masters and officers. Heroes was from the bottom up: five British deckhands and engineroom men, an ordinary US deckhand, a Lascar stoker, a Norwegian radio-operator. Intercut was footage of the only remaining Liberty ship, a moving museum which does annual voyages around the US coast to remind the relatives of the participants of their Second World War experiences.<sup>149</sup> Fortunately what also received coverage was the lack of recognition and recompense for non-British seamen after the war. The Lascar interview concentrates on the lack of pensions medals and acknowledgment

<sup>145</sup> 50mins, archival material and participants interviews; [http://www.u-boat.net/special/movies/the\\_atlantic\\_war.htm](http://www.u-boat.net/special/movies/the_atlantic_war.htm)

<sup>146</sup> Others were RN in WW2, "researched from British archives by Roland Smith over ten years," part 6, 'Perilous Waters', the Atlantic Battle and part 7, 'Hazards of Russian Convoys', proudly stressing "all the known archive film, this programme must be the only ever devoted to the emotive subject." Also available from DD Video was the 1978 BBC technical-history documentary Battle of the Atlantic, among compilations of carrier and battlefleet footage, and features Lifeboat, Western Approaches, and Coastal Command. The latter is clearly stated to be "Official 1942 documentary", demonstrating that blindness to the difference between Feature and documentary is as alive as ever!

<sup>147</sup> All above were available by order from the Internet at <http://www.members.aol.com/marbooks/videos.html>

<sup>148</sup> It was new in the sense it was seen, translated, outside Germany.

for non-white seamen, though wartime shipping line histories record that awards and medals were made to some Lascars, Indians, Chinese and West Indian seamen - at least officially. The Tower Hill Memorial names were shown, but not mentioned.<sup>150</sup>

The content of Forgotten Heroes was too confronting, and without breaks or respite from harrowing material. It did not connect these tales to the overall picture. It narrated a few of the tens of thousands of stories of suffering which merchant seamen, but none of the hundreds of thousands of stories without suffering. The effect was to desensitise the ordinary viewer, who had little conception of life at sea and almost none of war on or in it. Without balancing the trauma with hope, viewers would not want to remember. There was little of the positive, normal, aspects of life, the enormous fund of anecdotes, humour, and scene-setting also available. It was too grim, too painful to be acceptable, even possibly to relatives of the participants. In earlier Battle documentaries explaining to Europe and North America exactly what the Battle was, why it was important, and needed remembering, was explicit.<sup>151</sup>

The seamen's Battle myth was presented in all its glory: life was hard, the weather was the greatest danger, conditions were poor, pay terrible, life ashore cheap, fun, rich, and exciting, especially in America. Fear, worry, attack, injury, and long open-boat survival ordeals and/or death were the irreversible, everyday war experience. Interviewees spoke of "fear all the time", the "horrific casualties", were "just picked off"; are "still outraged at their treatment"; "never enough recognition" during the war or after.<sup>152</sup> There was in wartime, more than before or since.<sup>153</sup> There was no wartime footage of life aboard ships in convoy or the attacks and sinkings harrowingly discussed. Clearly for these men it was harrowing, but they were not totally representative.<sup>154</sup> Admittedly many convoys were saved by bad weather, by removal of U-Boats

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<sup>149</sup> SS *Jeremiah O'Brien*, the "last Liberty."

<sup>150</sup> The Imperial War Graves Commission Tower Hill Merchant Navy memorial to "Merchant seamen with no known grave" was approved by HM Queen Elizabeth in March 1955; *Trident* magazine op.cit, p.179.

<sup>151</sup> Such as the *Victory at Sea* episodes; "Wolfpack", and *Battle of the Atlantic*.

<sup>152</sup> *Forgotten Heroes* 1994 op.cit.

<sup>153</sup> As described at length in Lane, 1990, op.cit Ch.3, pp.33-66.

<sup>154</sup> As Blair 1997 op.cit p.426 relates, 97% of Atlantic convoys were never attacked, and 80% were never even sighted.

from Dönitz's authority, and many must simply have passed over the Atlantic in 1943-45, when open-ocean pack-attack had been abandoned, and there were many more ships, convoys, and many more escorts to cover them.

What was less explored, though it was initially mentioned, was the unseen, unrecompensed trauma of worry, fear and unending tension all seamen - and almost all combatants - were subjected to, irrespective of whether they were attacked. Related instead were the usual tales of open-boat endurance, amputations for immersion foot (one man with terrible infections after an operation in a Soviet hospital), accusations of being "army dodgers" and official letters home stating that men were lost at sea, pay stopped from the day the ship was lost (which did not occur after mid-1941) or income tax demands on wages. Also unexplored was the postwar half-century of relative obscurity and silence, compared to the relatively high profile they only enjoyed (but do not mention) during the war years of Ministry of Information propaganda and morale-boosting.

Attempting controversy, like Dönitz, was the Canadian Black Pit.<sup>155</sup> Concerning only the mythically decimated convoy SC-107, it combined archival footage, dramatisation (of bridge scenes, not ships) and interviews.<sup>156</sup> Senior Royal Canadian Navy staff were criticised in 1942 and in this documentary for negligence, not the crews themselves, in causing the rapid expansion, brief training and technological lag behind the Royal Navy which made the Canadian vessels ineffective.<sup>157</sup> Comparison was excluded between Canadian and British groups, the latter were no more effective against wolfpack-attack without air support, when they took these convoys over in January 1943. Not until the coming of the very-long-range Liberators, and organic air cover from escort carriers, as well as additional roving escorts in support groups, could wolfpacks in mid-ocean, in poor weather, be fought successfully.<sup>158</sup> This documentary was an unfortunate revenge on men long

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<sup>155</sup> See Appendix 2 for details.

<sup>156</sup> SC-107 [42 ships escorted by 6 Canadian warships] was sighted on 29 October 1942 and attacked by more than 14 U-Boats over the following week. 15 ships were sunk for three U-Boats and one damaged, making it a rare success among wolfpack operations. Usually weather, fuel or escorts drove wolfpacks away after sinking three ships, or fewer.

<sup>157</sup> at [http://www.u-boat.net/special/movies/the\\_black\\_pit.htm](http://www.u-boat.net/special/movies/the_black_pit.htm)

<sup>158</sup> Milner in Sadkovich op.cit p.52.; Milner in Runyan & Copes op.cit p.135.

dead, with other elements put aside.<sup>159</sup> It did, however, also raise awareness of the Canadian Navy's participation in the Battle. Very few people would have read Milner's books, by comparison.

Proudly We Served, about USS *Mason*, the only US Navy vessel crewed by black combatants, was misleading, and unsatisfying, even given that its purpose was recognition of Blacks, not sailors or the Battle. In recognising their service it overplayed their part while underplaying the Battle. The few convoys they escorted were assumed to be historic and important; as if the US Navy won the Battle single-handed, with no mention of other services or nationalities. *Mason* served in the Atlantic from late 1943 to early 1945, after the climax. Despite the fact that US Navy and Coastguard vessels escorted at least half the Atlantic convoys of 1940-41, after Pearl Harbor the US Navy never contributed more than 5% of escort forces: and then of central Atlantic troop convoys and offensively-operating task forces centered on escort-carriers.<sup>160</sup> *Mason* never saw action. Much of the documentary's drama, when not misusing footage from other navies, other theatres (and even other wars) was of one convoy when the weather was severe. While not denigrating their courage, or ignoring the great steps forward they were making in an unintegrated Navy, this was hardly the stuff of legend.

The stories of black US seamen would have made a better subject. There were many more than 340 of them, before, during and after the war, and some saw action. They had far more interesting and valid tales of suffering and sacrifice than 340 navy men.<sup>161</sup> No-one looked for them (save very recently on the Net). There was no credibility to be gained in telling their story (which is why the US Navy supported the *Mason* documentary). There were tales of black British (read Jamaican) and American seamen who put up with

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<sup>159</sup> As had 1992's Death By Moonlight, [Galafilm/CBC/Nat.Film Board of Canada] which attempted to prove that high Canadian Air Force bomber losses were still hidden from the public, fifty years after these were actually made known.

<sup>160</sup> Stories of troop convoys are limited almost entirely to accounts by bomber crews who travelled to and from training in them: troop convoys were fast and heavily-escorted; rarely sighted or attacked, which led to few sinkings or incidents. This meant, in the anonymous memorable phrase, "happy is the convoy with no history."

<sup>161</sup> The sole black survivor of the liberty ship *Mary Luckenbach*, or those mentioned in incidents related in Morison's 1960 Vol.10, op.cit, p.140-3.

worse than bad weather, and even fought surface raiders and aircraft.<sup>162</sup> Proudly We Served was intended to raise consciousness among (especially black) Americans. It had the usual "tendency among American historians to narrow the focus onto purely national experience" and "national myopia", excluding anything not American.<sup>163</sup> The power of establishment lobbygroups donated crumbs to the unrecognised, in return for publicity accruing to itself.

Typical modern representation, chaining history to producer's intentions, was the "Dönitz" episode of Hitler's Henchmen, a coproduction of ZDF in Germany and SBS Australia.<sup>164</sup> It was as misleading and unsatisfying as Proudly We Served. Facts and historical documents incline audiences to believe documentary, unlike historical films. It was chronologically amorphous, non-contextual, and biased. This was despite all but two of the distinguished interviewees being pro-Dönitz, or at least balanced: the exceptions being his grandson (and son of a leading U-Boat commander, staff officer and postwar complier of records, Hessler), who said "Dönitz never came to terms with his relationship to Hitler"; and the doyen of German 'Regret Historians', Buchheim. He remained as anti-Dönitz as ever, refusing to acknowledge salient points.<sup>165</sup> He saw Dönitz as a power-hungry, ambitious, unemotional leader, willing to do anything for his Führer at the cost of his men. Dönitz did increasingly send his men out to die, as everyone did by 1944, and even though he was rewarded with the succession, he disobeyed Hitler's final orders and continued the war only to rescue refugees from the advancing Soviets. The last loyal man Hitler trusted was only interested in preserving Germany, at the Nazi's expense. Interviewees had their words twisted into condemnation, in contrast to what they were saying.<sup>166</sup> The music was from Das Boot; the whole production locked to the serial concept of allowing no defence, no mitigating factors, or

<sup>162</sup> Notably on the Kola Run, SS *Stephen Hopkins'* fight with a German raider; see also Morison, S E, History of USN Operations In WW-II: Vol 10: the Atlantic Battle Won 1943-45, Little & Brown, Boston, 1960, vol.10 p.140-41.

<sup>163</sup> Milner in Runyan & Copes 1994, op.cit pp.128 and 131.

<sup>164</sup> Or perhaps a mere case of 'rebadging'.

<sup>165</sup> Such as the number of Allied ships, aircraft, and personnel the Battle consumed [2 million workers, according to some estimates, in vessels, construction and support, including electronics manufacture and cryptology] and the impossibility of changing the nature of the Battle once begun. Tarrant, V.E., The U-Boat Wars 1914-45, A&A Press, London, 1989.

<sup>166</sup> Kennedy, Hinsley (who misled by saying, perhaps only meaning the pre-climax era, that evasion due to Ultra denied the U-Boats targets, manifestly not true by late 1942); Otto Kranzbühler, lawyer at Nuremberg; Ursula Hessler, Dönitz's daughter; U-Boat-West Chief Rösing, staff officer Bohm-Tettlebach, U-Boat commanders Closen, Hardegen, von Schroeter, and "Silent Otto" Kretschmer. Curiously, Hardegen took over U-123 [*Oakcrest*] from Moehle in June 1941.



even any balance.<sup>167</sup> Dönitz was included only because he was Hitler's successor. His U-Boat leadership was used not as biography, but only to magnify his evil nature, callous personality, and Nazi credentials.<sup>168</sup>

NOVA and WGBH-Boston in 1994 broadcast Codebreakers. This celebrated a century of American cryptology, its hook the first viewing of the still-secret 'Purple Analog' built in the US to break Japanese codes. It also featured Enigma, including a very informative description of its workings, thankfully not overstating Ultra. Kahn's influence through interview and feature kept this to a minimum. As Law proposed at the fiftieth Anniversary Liverpool conference, it was another 'post-Ultra' work. It was not post-mythical. Though the secret agent Asche was mentioned, Polish cryptologers were not named, nor their research or methods, especially the electromechanical *bombes* which were the key to both British codebreaking and early computing. It discussed the importance of British captures of German cypher materials and the ability to divert convoys around U-Boats and wolfpacks. The all-important chronology and critical nature of the 'Ultra blackout' of February-December 1942 and its effect on the Battle were not presented.<sup>169</sup> The shorter, less dangerous blackout of March 1943 was featured instead, where to Allied surprise new cyphers fell within weeks, not months.<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, VLR anti-submarine warfare aircraft, escort-carriers, and co-operation were seen as the key to winning the Battle. Ultra merely enabled diversion: preventing the Battle being lost until other resources were strong enough to win it. HF/DF was never mentioned, nor were any Germans among those interviewed: including the leader of the *U-110* capture party, David Balme.

Decisive Weapons: "Anti-submarine warfare" continued both trends of technical and specialised documentary forms.<sup>171</sup> Shorter and shallower than earlier efforts, it concentrated solely on the surface, not airborne, sensor and

<sup>167</sup> In one place, referring to documents we cannot read, the narrator asserts "evidence of criminal lunacy."

<sup>168</sup> As with A. Kemp's German Commanders of WWII, Osprey, London, 1982.

<sup>169</sup> The Kriegsmarine changed U-Boat cyphers from a four to five-rotor scrambler, raising by an order of magnitude the number of combinations, and thus the number to be tested, in order to decode an encrypted message. Only 10 months of effort and a leap forward in technology and processing speed made it possible, while diverting convoys round wolfpacks became difficult due to few positions and increasing numbers of boats on patrol.

<sup>170</sup> Associated with the critical losses of those months, this structure made for more dramatic television.

<sup>171</sup> BBC, 1996, 1 episode of 12, 26min, see in Appendix 2: "Battle of the Atlantic Documentaries, 1945-2000.", of this thesis.

weapon responses to the U-Boat threat. Interviewees included Don Kirton of HMS *Bluebell*, and Robert Atkinson of HMS *Pink*. Both were in Howard Bailey's 1994 oral history The Battle: the Corvettes and their Crews. Thilo Bode & Karl Topp [whose post-Buchheim counter-mythology was unmentioned<sup>172</sup>] gave the German view, and historian Dan van der Vat the strategic and technical. Sequential topics were SC-7's 'slaughter', U-Boats, corvettes, depthcharges, ASDIC, radar, U-Boat mass production, Pearl Harbor & 'Drumbeat' [without exploration of its myth], HF/DF, Hedgehog, escort-carriers, convoy theory, and the Liberator. These were summed using convoy SC-130 (Cdr. Mike Gretton RN described his father's participation, as in Crisis Convoy, 1974, & Convoy Escort Commander, 1964 - see Ch.4 & 3). Atlantic supremacy enabling D-Day and hence VE-Day was still overemphasised, as in 1952's Victory At Sea. Much the same content, style, and sequence as "Wolfpack" were employed, to pleasing but limited effect. No new perspective was present.<sup>173</sup> Other documentaries - liners, oil, the war in general - were either mythical or distorting. They concentrated on famous incidents, emphasised one element over many, or emphasised land over sea warfare, without balance.

The TV series and website Secrets of War provided the vital effect of promoting and moving the Battle toward the mainstream of public awareness, but no new information or perspective. The Atlantic campaign and Ultra were covered separately, though interconnected. These accounts relied heavily on interviews of participants, previous technical documentaries and on familiar footage. No new model, computer graphic or other means of presenting operations, explanations or experiences was provided. This meant that the episodes were less advanced in presentation than "Wolfpack" of 1973. [WWW.secretsofwar.com](http://WWW.secretsofwar.com) also provided raw unedited transcripts of the research and televised interviews. Many belied the commercial intent behind the series, in undeleted questions such as "Do you have a book you'd like to push?" when interviewing men who were often labelled as the author of a new or key work.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> For Topp's countermythology see Hadley op.cit pp.180-4, 193-4.

<sup>173</sup> The actual rate of losses could have been shown, as well as progress in how anti-submarine warfare is represented, by the use of computer graphics and animation, to illustrate a U-Boat stalking a convoy, and being hunted, in three dimensions, along the lines of dramatised cinema scenes.

<sup>174</sup> From the transcript of the interview of Professor Jürgen Rohwer at [www.secretsofwar.com/html/juergen\\_rohwer.html](http://www.secretsofwar.com/html/juergen_rohwer.html)

The Anniversary Era was one of noticeable change in prominence and portrayal. The Battle became better known through anniversary commemorations and more extensive coverage in general and encyclopaedic entries. Remembrance, better handled than in previous decades, informed audiences. Clearly counter-mythical works were produced, but were dominated by non-mythical and mythical works. Their excellent standard and coverage heralded a new period of interest, sophistication and coverage. The new medium of the Internet was now the area of growth. Unfortunately this resembled and replicated earlier ideas and representations. It also reinforced existing ideas, and existing power structures, which maintained the status quo where depiction and use were concerned. Museums and armed services still dominated public presentation of the Battle, while small private websites, generally by relatives, though equally easy to access (the Net's only advantage) had to contend with already established sites and the prominence of more famous events, battles, and campaigns, in public memory.<sup>175</sup>

Documentary flourished for its own purposes, not that of participants, or the kind the Battle required to gain more recognition and better representation. Fiction also continued, but with only moderate commercial success as one subgenre among many "contemporary ephemeral fictions."<sup>176</sup> It was as devoid of critical recognition as forty years ago. The era of the classic novel was over. One cinema contribution was only a commercial success. The other had critical success with the rerelease of a post-Buchheim film. It was too early to tell its eventual value to participants or historians. That was also the state of histories of the Battle. It was too soon for counter-mythology's effects on portrayal to be visible. No acceptable representation existed which presented all participants and nationalities, both genders, the strategic, tactical and personal dimensions of the battle and its surroundings, the technological competition, and especially the contributing myths and representations involved. New sources and interpretations may yield a more balanced perspective in years to come. Ways must be found to present mythology and reality with respect for participant's memory, while moving beyond mere campaign history soon enough for those that remain to appreciate.

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<sup>175</sup> The other problem is that minor interests have to be looked for, they cannot be stumbled across by the general public.

<sup>176</sup> Fussell 1989 op.cit p.239.

"Face the past - and keep it alive."

--Dr. Ing. Heinz Nordhoff.

### Wiedervereinigung und Vergangenheitsbewältigung

The story of the representations of the Battle of the Atlantic is one of continuity and change. The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989-90 was the 'historical' end of the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> It marked a reconciliation of many national and personal issues. It also highlighted the ongoing need for reconciliation between contending groups, for reunification of scattered and separate experiences and portrayals, and for facing the past and learning from it.<sup>2</sup> The primary message of all these works has been *this is the way it felt*. The secondary message has been *by reading or watching them both participant and vicarious audiences can experience, comprehend, and commemorate those events*. All the representations of all the eras were attempts to reconcile the pain and discomfort of experience and memory, or to remember and commemorate the glory and depression, elation and achievement of key incidents. Participants often felt they were not sufficiently recognised for their service. The novels, histories, movies and documentaries were created partially to correct that deficit. The representations contained the essence of the experiences, the very good and the very bad, the most powerful, significant moments. These representations were how the Battle was viewed by its participants, and how it was passed on to vicarious audiences. There was little need for innovation. The myths supplied what the participants required.

Mythologising was an important and effective means of comprehending and presenting experience. The creation of myths about events, about conditions, and about men enabled understanding and release. The hero myths of U-Waffe and seamen commemorated defeated or forgotten servicemen. They enabled nations to rework old symbols and archetypes into new forms for new crises. These myths were less applicable to the men of the escort and air forces, so they had to make their own myths. Strain, epics of endurance, and dedication in the face of odds and new technologies gave

<sup>1</sup> 'Wiedervereinigung' means "Reunification" (specifically of Germany) while 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' means "Confronting and overcoming guilt about the past"; Ellis, W, "The Morning After: Germany Reunited", National Geographic, September 1991, p.11.

<sup>2</sup> Facing both the traumas of the past: the guilt of surviving, and the guilt of destroying and killing.

them a special sense of purpose, meaning, and service. Those burdened with grief could seek solace in seeing what those involved in the events went through. They could understand a little better what husbands, fathers and brothers did. They also offered participation in the lives and deaths of the other: the enemy. They too could be seen, understood, empathised with. These representations operated as a myriad tiny obelisks and plaques. They were essential for most participants and their relatives, who could never visit a memorial. Yet they commemorated more than the events, the passage of time as defined by official occasions, and the overt tribute to those who made the supreme sacrifice. They operated for the implicitly commemorated survivors as well. They have been most significantly memorials for the living. We should not have needed obelisks or massive pylons. We should not have even needed walls of names or rolls of honour. All we needed was words.

"Early modernists such as Pound, Joyce, Yeats, and Elliot reacted to the perceived metaphysical crisis of the early twentieth century by creating personal mythologies - mythotherapy."<sup>3</sup> Much Atlantic Battle work can be construed in the same way. The need for heightened, beyond merely operational versions of the events, where the essence was expressed in a refined form, was the cause of the mythologising. By writing about the Battle and/or their experiences in a hyper-real fashion and giving it an even grander scale and epic quality than it already possessed, participants and enthusiasts were attempting to raise the Battle to 'true myth', to do therapeutically for themselves what nation, service and family had not.<sup>4</sup> Recasting events in this way made myth, and myth made sense, and gave more relief than any restricted, corrected, revised, demythologised, debunked account ever could. In some cases myth hardened into dogma, but even that reassured and comforted participants. All on each side needed to come to terms with the events, to relate to them, even if many were unsuccessful. This was all *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, as much for the Allied participants as the German. The Allies did not need to come to terms with defeat, but they still required a relationship to the events.

<sup>3</sup> John Barth, in Nelson, TN, *Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist's Maze*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1982, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> 'True Myth' ie genuine, historical Myth, concerning the gods, heroes and ancestors of a people, not a recent, artificial construction (however unwitting ) by authors or publicists.

Atlantic Campaign myths emerged from centuries of maritime and naval mythology colliding with late nineteenth century technological advance, at the end of an era of military, economic and material progress. New ideas and methods of making war spawned different views and reactions to experiences. "It takes thirty years for any technological revolution to be absorbed by society."<sup>5</sup> 1945 marked the acceptance and incorporation of the imagery and features of submarine and anti-submarine warfare into Western society and culture.<sup>6</sup> This conveniently coincided with VE-Day and the end of the Battle. 1939 had merely been the resumption of a competition interrupted 19 years before: the continuation of a technical and logistic seesaw which persevered beyond the Cold War, on drawing boards, in computers, and at sea. History and fiction defined perspectives of the event a decade after war's end. These portrayed the Battle the way its participants wanted. The powerful and pungent accounts of this era were not soon supplanted.

By 1960, cinematic portrayal of sea warfare and the Battle had come full circle, returning to the didactic, uninspired, limited representations of Great War newsreel and interwar features. Cinema representation improved and evolved during the Second World War and briefly after. By 1955 this mass medium was driven by audience taste and commercialism.<sup>7</sup> Historical representations, with the inertia and force of tradition and continuity, changed slowly, and fiction moved from best-selling literary classics to commercial genre-pieces. No one needed the representations to change. They were merely added to. Technical histories contributed details and minutiae for participants and fans. Secondary works began to build upon the passionate works of the previous period. The myths of the Battle became the accepted historical view. The Battle was now told in all forms the way the participants desired. They possessed the forms and means of production of their stories.

By 1975, the 30-Year Rule allowed new sources for versions of existing accounts. The accidental revelation of Ultra had several consequences. Technical history benefitted from new analysis. Manufacturing, logistics,

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<sup>5</sup> Cringely, R, *Accidental Empires*, Viking, London, 1992, p.44.

<sup>6</sup> Though it is debatable how much anti-submarine warfare, unlike submarine warfare, was ever clearly incorporated.

<sup>7</sup> Audiences seemed to prefer action to drama, and actual events recreated to stories which made characters evolve.



weapons development and research began to receive more recognition. Historians embarked on a tangential path, a detour for two decades, not a new perspective. For the first time the Battle began to be reinterpreted in favour of a new group. Those at sea began to seem less vital than those in laboratories and factories. Documentary was so limited in presence its effect was minimal, and feature film even less so. Novelists yielded both the best-selling classic the subject had been waiting since 1955 to receive, and a controversy strong enough to shift it toward the limelight. Earlier controversies had been confined to participants and their relatives. The new controversy of content and presentation engendered by Buchheim's Das Boot was instead limited almost entirely to German-speakers. It was the only tangent in a ceaseless effort to comprehend the U-Boat. Its cinematic portrayal, and consequent media position and documentary production, took over the debate.

By 1989, when a fledgling post-Ultra era was in evidence, change began to gather pace. Anniversaries provided an opportunity for a higher profile, in addition to increasing coverage in general accounts of the Second World War. Academic history was now a considerable and growing area of activity. New subjects, such as the service of female personnel, homosexuals, and ethnic minorities, appeared. New approaches and comparisons emerged. German U-Boat myth and the sociology of merchant seamen were examined. Scientific, statistical and rigorous narrative analysis gained credibility. For the first time new interpretations were posed. These were not usually contributed by participants, but were created by using their sources. These new representations were not critical or derogatory. They were intended to honour and support those who served. The long boom in repetitive formulaic fiction declined, as did that of under-narrated, over-detailed, technical histories. There is as yet no 'post-Buchheim' era in fiction, as there is a post-Ultra era in history. By 2000AD the Internet had been added to media. New perspectives were visible, in how other wars were dealt with on-line, and how other kinds of information and experiences were portrayed. Electronic presentation remained as stuck as discourse in other media. Battle websites were merely pamphlets or books online: outdated forms of presentation in a powerful new medium. There was only a hint of the convergence of fiction, history, documentary, cinema feature, and

communication the Net offered. Today at least the Battle can be found on the Net.<sup>8</sup> The peripheralisation of the Battle and the relative neglect of its participants came slowly to an end. Both the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle and of Walker's death have been promoted and commemorated by digital publications.

The limitations and problems of conventional official commemoration were contrastingly expressed by an unofficial anniversary poem. Matt Simpson's poem of the Fiftieth Anniversary was mentioned in Chapter Six. His poetry worked on several levels, simultaneously presenting now and recalling then.

The Common Touch  
*On the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic*

On a day like this of rain and rattling helicopters,  
flags slap-slapping like smacked behinds,

on a grey day like this obstinate as Tory decline,  
a time of soggy handshakes and grim smiles,

when the stuff of war's brought out of mothballs and buffed up,  
and lachrymose old men march past with rows of dashing gongs  
to validate Monarchy and country yet again...

The centre section of his poem attacked the late-May 1993 commemoration of the Battle's Fiftieth anniversary, opposing the church services, exhibitions, and conferences which presented only the official, acceptable face of recognition. What specifically went wrong was that the Battle of then, and the largely-overlooked servicemen and seamen of half a century were misused as 'publicity fodder' the way they were once used as cannon fodder.

I took you to the Albert Dock (where that phlegmatic pageant's underway now as I write)  
...dawdling over coffee by the Maritime Museum,  
watching kids with clipboards converting wonder into usefulness...  
...until the place's fakery and smarm became too much.

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<sup>8</sup> In 1996 typing 'Battle of the Atlantic' into search engines yielded no hits. Today it yields between 60 and 70. These are largely Canadian Government Veterans Affairs, or US Merchant Marine support and commemoration sites. The remainder are private relatives commemorative sites, or links to online book and video stores offering Atlantic Battle products.

Most prominent was the general use and specific misuse of the past that museums, memorials and commemorations can commit. The once bustling Albert Dock, the busiest port in the world, is now a Museum, with images, relics, and 'stories to tell', "*converting wonder into usefulness*": Simpson remembers its past, and the stories his family's workers told, and "*the place's fakery and smarm become too much.*" Once again recreation and public history fail to capture the spirit or sense of the place. More significantly, the spirit and sense of the Atlantic Campaign was elsewhere: out on an anonymous, indifferent ocean.

"What was this once?" you asked. Once? Creak of gantries winching bales, bawl of blockermen doling out day's work, those unlucky shambling off to pitch-and-toss somewhere against a jigger wall:

This refers to the continuing industrial action on the Liverpool docks. The lines describe the pre-union 'first come, first served' work practices on the docks, and by implication the free-enterprise non-unionised system current management wishes to return to. These strikes began in 1992 and continue, long after similar disputes in Australia were resolved.

Folk-memory spooks! Lashed to the quay in front of us a replica - reminding us how puny things once dared great deeds - Drake's *Golden Hind*...

Set between the fake museum and the commemoration is another warning: that replicas and reenactments merely, as Greg Denning pointed out, tend "to hallucinate the past as merely the present in fancy dress."<sup>9</sup>

...The Atlantic Battle rattles on.

Today's wind is whipping up grey History to service po-faced ceremony,  
rain's rat-tatting on Drake's drum: Queen's reviewing her warriors,  
stiff old men with reawakened loyalties...

Old men feel obligated to step forward to be recognised for the most important moments of their lives, for which they have not been lauded before, or will again. This is their only chance, and yet it is the regime and the government which is also supported and lauded, not for their sacrifice and service, their experiences and memories, but merely as their once-employer, for whom they may or may not have felt loyal to since 1945, or voted for, or supported.

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<sup>9</sup> Denning, G, *Mr. Bligh's Bad Language*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1992, p.4.

The actual Atlantic was separate and excluded from awareness and attention. Success was mixed for remembrance and recompense of the neglected living. Books were effectively communicating their myths, ceremonies less so. Anniversaries highlighted for the public the type of ceremony, mutual memory and communication participants had been having for decades, via non-official associations, societies, dinners and pilgrimages to famous sites. This was not possible for former Atlantic servicemen. The late Carl Sagan wrote that

"The real triumph of Gettysburg was not 1863 but 1913, when the surviving veterans of the Blue and the Grey...met in celebration and solemn memorial...When the time came to remember they fell, sobbing, into each other's arms. They could not help themselves. We need more than anniversary sentimentalism and holiday piety and patriotism...to confront and challenge...conventional wisdom."<sup>10</sup>

The Battle of the Atlantic did not have a single such cathartic event. Opposing Navies became Allies soon after war's end, while their sailors forgot wartime differences, or were once again separate civilians. Seamen were excluded, or intermingled without ceremony. Government recognition of their service only grew as their numbers shrank and the urgency of their requirements grew. Commemoration depends, as *Dasher* and as the Vietnam experience proved, on who wants to remember. Things too mundane, too painful or controversial will be excluded by officialdom, to the detriment of those who served. The Second World War generated icons and strong civilian memories because the experience was no longer strictly among 'combatants' but spread throughout the population. These were separate from the Battle. "Those in convoy could think of nothing else, those outside it, couldn't imagine it."<sup>11</sup> This contributed to their sense of abandonment by the public, and to their complaints. Representations had to form appropriate substitutes for the commemorations. Here the essence of the experience was expressed. Here too the opinions of the servicemen on their neglect were defined and enshrined. Here the representations paused for a long time. They were fulfilling their purpose.

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<sup>10</sup> Sagan, C & Druyan, A, Billions & Billions: Life & Death At the End of the Millennium, Headline, London, 1997, p.205.

<sup>11</sup> Winton 1983 op.cit p.110. The war made strong memories, but the Battle was only strong for those involved in it, not the majority of the population.

In addition to providing the essence of the experiences through mythology, representations needed to change. The world changed. Individual members of new generations grew up and wanted to comprehend and experience the events. The existing forms became inadequate. The academic and scholarly works of the Anniversary decade, and indeed the outstanding works of all eras, indicated the positive directions that the discourse could take. Progress can be made, in analysing the human-technology interface, in analysing class relationships, in gender study, both through writing women more fully into it, and regarding the masculinity and maleness of seamen as a sociocultural construct, not a mere given. The relationship of bodies in space could serve as a basis for a poststructuralist examination. Such new interpretations could only come from academia: only they have the requisite background, skills, vocabulary and imagination. Many academics can see the myth, see over, through, past, and within it. Ships at sea, men in ships, aircraft and submarines are bodies in space. Both in reality and in the frame of a photograph or film they are suspended in space, in scene, in shot. There is space between ships, space between U-Boats and ships, between U-Boats and the surface, between aircraft and the sea. There is space between countries, culturally and geographically. The spaces between most countries in the Battle was ocean. There is space between men in ships - often not enough - but physically and psychologically. There is space between men and home, men and land. There is space also between men in the water, between men in boats and rafts, between loss and rescue, between life and death.

General cinematic portrayals - and historical myth - seem evenly split between The Cruel Sea and Das Boot. The Allied experience is of too few, meagrely armed and equipped escorts and aircraft, vainly protecting old, over-insured, under-maintained ships manned by the unrecognised and underpaid. The German experience is of empty ocean stripped by convoys and evasive routing, the constant risk of air and surface attack, forced to dive and pounded for hours by depthcharges, all enhancing the fearful foetid atmosphere of escort and U-Boat life. On one side, a corvette bridge-crew's faces lighting up from a ship aflame from a torpedo hit on the opposite side of the convoy, too

late to counterattack. On the other, Jürgen Prochnow dropping down the conning-tower ladder yelling "alaaaaaarrrrrm!" in a splash of seawater. This is such a distinctive catchphrase it is even a chapter heading in Wolfpack, the British coffee-table photo-essay equivalent of U-BootKrieg: and a page heading in the near- "official" U-Boat website, run by a 28 year old in Iceland, Gudmundur Helgason.<sup>12</sup>

One principal difference between postwar German and Allied writings is that British, Canadian and American writers need not feel much responsibility for their war service. Nor do they need to feel - or escape - war guilt, fear, loathing, or the sense of being pawns, one of the more popular feelings among German ex-servicemen. For former Allied servicemen there is no Nazi past to deny, and they can be more clear-headed, or romantic, than German veterans. They do not have the same burdens from history and popular culture and memory. At the same time, however, there is less to debate, dispute, or gloss over and cover up. There may still be a need for inclusion, and the knowledge that writings that stray from orthodoxy, from genre and dogma lead at best to obscurity and anonymity.<sup>13</sup> At worst such innovation or straying means exclusion, condemnation from former comrades, defamation, libel.<sup>14</sup> Irving used this exclusion and condemnation to 'remake his network': to bond with an entirely different group, the hard-right wing in Germany and elsewhere. He was not, of course, an ex-serviceman, but he became close to a certain group of participants and their followers. His status as a leading, and very capable, historian gave and continues to give, them credibility. This path is not open to others unless they wish to be associated with such social and politico-historical forces. Few would merely to have their own opinions.

One interesting aspect of Das Boot not touched on by Hadley was the separation between the controversies. The simple, mild controversy in the English speaking world revolved around the portrayal of Nazism, and of Germans as ordinary sailors. The virulent, complex and polarised controversy in Germany revolved around the portrayal of participants as sailors and their

<sup>12</sup> At [www.uboot.net/index.html](http://www.uboot.net/index.html)

<sup>13</sup> Becoming an "Einzelfahrer", independent farer" or "independent merchant vessel", in German parlance, meaning an iconoclastic ex-serviceman, 'going his own way'. Hadley 1995 op.cit. p.163.

<sup>14</sup> Ostracism and exclusion of "Einzelfarher's" is most apparent in Germany; *ibid* pp.143, 160, 163-4, 189.



duty and sacrifice as citizens. But there was very little connection between the two. Very little reference has been made by non-German writers to the German views, or vice versa. Writers such as Suid only explored the presentation of the war sans Nazism, or of Germans at war sans their regime. Controversies about the same work seem as unrelated as the types of works and perspectives as a whole.

While the absence of a guilty Nazi past is something that doesn't plague western ex-servicemen, it also robs them and their work of political power, historical controversy and debate, and the force and depth - or at least polydimensionality - that ambiguity, concealment, revisionism, and a failure to properly resolve the past bring to German writings. German writings have tended to refrain from emotion, no matter how harrowing the experiences they are describing. They have tended toward monotone: justifying honour and duty, or expressing regret and loss, but never a balance between them in a given text. They can however be controversial, or at least struggling with themselves under the surface. Little of this occurs among Western writings, while they generally have more balanced feelings, and are more emotionally engaged with their subject, and thus able to involve the reader in a way few German writings can. Perhaps we must wait till all participants are dead before historical accounts can move beyond what they want to read or write, so our understanding does not aggravate and upset them.<sup>15</sup> This is not what Irving did, but any outsider stating 'this is not how it was' always gets at best a cool reception, and not without reason. We can however tell the stories realistically without belittling them and their experiences, or magnifying them beyond sense. Ways must be found to give them their share of fame and commemoration in the interim. Another distinction between the sides was that the German forces were [save secretarial staff] uniformly male and white, while women made up a substantial portion of Allied training and communications, and ethnic seamen from all over the world served in merchant navies. There was a disparity in the voices rarely alluded to in the representations.

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<sup>15</sup> Or so that participants cannot condemn or criticise merely on the grounds that 'their' experience is being denigrated or misrepresented.

Little coherent meaning can be extracted from these works because little meanings was said or embedded in them. The participants who began the myths and perpetuated them assigned little meaning to the Battle. This is perhaps one reason, finally, for their relative obscurity as well as that of the campaign they describe. They had no message to captivate their audience with. Over the last thirty years new ideas, approaches, terminologies and conclusions have emerged only slowly. There has been no 'grand synthesis', no innovative coalescing of parts into more than their sum. There are now indications of where and how that synthesis can be achieved, in technical, gender, and ethnic history, in the 'digital convergence' of media offered by internet websites, and lastly a grand synthesis of all these advances. This text embodies a slow but growing recognition that the representations were intended to summarise and express the most dear and vital ideas and needs of a select group. Other audiences have been able to experience these events and feelings vicariously. The experiences and their significance were not forgotten, distorted, or trivialised. Their power and scale remained undiminished. The writers saw little meaning in their war. Their survival amid relative neglect and collective amnesia instead gave them purpose and strength. As Paul Fussell put it, "there was less coherent meaning in the events of wartime than we had hoped."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Fussell 1989 op.cit, p.296.

1915: Liner *Lusitania* sunk, heralding commencement of unrestricted U-Boat warfare on shipping.

1916-17 U-Boat warfare recommences after break; US enters war partly due to this; U-Boat becomes dominant German naval cultural icon, represented in books, novels, pamphlets, cinema, documentary, newsreels, memorabilia.<sup>1</sup>

1919-: German memoirs such as von Spiegel's *U-Boat-202* published in English.

1921: *Jutland* British feature film with strong documentary content mythically and misleadingly illustrates largest Great War seabattle: miniatures, maps, RN ships & crew used.

1924: *Zebrugge* British feature film concerned slightly with wartime U-Boat threat.

1926: German feature films *U-9*, *Sinking of UC-48*, & *U-Boat in Danger*;  
Surface-fleet films *The Scuttled Fleet*, and *Battle of Jutland* all premiere.

1927: *The Battles of Coronel & the Falklands* last of interwar British naval features with heavy RN involvement and assistance.

Moltenort U-Boat memorial begun near Kiel.

1930: Moltenort U-Boat memorial opened near Kiel.

1931: Hashagen's *The Log of a U-Boat Commander* among other German works published in English.

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1941: May: German cinema feature *U-boats Westwards* premieres.  
December: Strategic Victory, unseen, for belligerent UK & neutral US over Germany.

1943: May: Battle Tactical Climax: aircover & technology added to shipbuilding & convoy-escort strategy of WW1 applied 1940-41 to counter German Tonnage-War strategy.  
Soviet - US/UK Cold War begins.

1945: VE Day: limited actual damage to Ger from bombing; new U-Boat tech threats, uncovered. A-bomb tests & use: Nuclear weapons age begins. VJ day. End of rationing [US].  
Lt.Cdr J.E. Taylor's little-known *Northern Escort* published; possible template or origin for MacLean's later *HMS Ulysses*.

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1946-8: US Withdrawal from Europe.  
Nürnberg WarCrimes trials: Raeder, Dönitz, U-Boat Operations staff, commanders imprisoned.

1951: Monsarrat's *The Cruel Sea* published; instant bestseller & into film production.  
Paul Brickhill's *The DamBusters* published; "Britain's biggest-selling war book" by 1954.

1952: *The Cruel Sea* feature film released.  
NBC broadcasts 25-episode *Victory at Sea* TV documentary series.

1953: *The Malta Story*, docu-drama feature film, of the siege of Malta, released.  
End of Rationing of sugar confectionary, & citrus fruit in Britain.

1954: *The DamBusters* feature film, from Paul Brickhill's 1951 book, released. Bomber Command's cultural penetration.

*The Goons* episode "The Dreaded Batter-Pudding Hurler of Bexhill-on-Sea" [Ser.5 episode 3, 12/10/54], containing parodies of & references to both *Cruel Sea* & *Victory At Sea*, broadcast. Also episode *The Mystery of the Marie Celeste: Solved*.

1955: *HMS Ulysses* published. Sells out, instant classic, overnight sensation, household name, still in print: but is it original?

<sup>1</sup> For a full list of German works in German & English to 1995 see the Bibliography to Hadley op.cit 1995.

- 1956: The Battle of the River Plate film released.  
Reach for the Sky film released: the Battle of Britain's cultural penetration, via this Douglas Bader biopic.  
The War at Sea: the German Viewpoint by F.Ruge first general German history of WW2 naval operations.  
 Suez Crisis: US browbeats former Allies & current NATO occupiers of Germany into humiliating backdown.
- 1957: Roskill's War At Sea: RN Official History, vol.1, published.  
 German cinema feature Sharks & Little Fishes, from novel, premieres.  
The Enemy Below classic US U-Boat vs destroyer psychological confrontation film released; ironically very-peripheral US BoA operation, based on novel of a British destroyer.  
The Bridge on the River Kwai UKUS film released, one of all-time classic war films.  
 Dönitz released from Spandau Prison.  
 Sputnik: space age begins; epitomises era of looking-forward accentuated by rise of Nuclear Weapons & turn away from concentration on war years.
- 1958: The Silent Enemy UK Med.Sea midget-submarine feature film released.  
Run Silent Run Deep US Pacific Sub warfare feature film released.  
U-47--KptLt Prien German feature film released.
- 1959: Dönitz publishes memoirs Ten Years & Twenty Days.
- 1960: Sink the Bismarck! released, last of UK naval-war movies; tie-in history/novelisations by C.S. Forester [UK], Frank Brennan [US]. Critically derided as hopelessly dated but #1 UK box-office success.  
Under Ten Flags, US feature film of German raider, released.  
The Sea War UK TV documentary series broadcast, 1 episode scripted by Jackie Broome.
- 1963: Roskill's War At Sea vol 3 parts 1 & 2 published, completing Official History of wartime Royal Navy.
- 1967: British legislation changes release of military and government documents from 60 to 30 years: enabling public access to wartime primary sources within a few years.
- 1968: Irving's PQ-17 published.  
The Battle of Britain film released, a critical and commercial failure.
- 1969: British '30-year-Rule' secret documents for 1939 made open; begins period of explosive growth in interest & publication of Second World War history & revisionism.  
 Broome begins libel case against Irving's publishers, & wins [1971] £30,000 damages & withdrawal. RN, USN & MN antipathy smoulders, fuelled by lack of new information & hardening attitudes as participants & observers age.
- 1971: Peter Yates' peripheral Merchant-seaman's film Murphy's War released.
- 1972-3 The World At War UK TV documentary series broadcast, including "Wolfpack: U-Boats in the Atlantic, 1939-43."  
 LG Buchheim's antiwar Das Boot published, abridged translated: controversial among U-Boat men.
- 1974: The Ultra Secret 'blows the cover' on Bletchley Park's long-hidden wartime contribution to Allied cryptology, & to one of the keys of winning the Battle. Domination of WW2 historiography by *Ultra* commences, only slackening in middle 1990's.
- 1975-- Explosion of *Ultra*-revisionist naval histories & biographies, especially concerning the Battle.
- 1978: Jan: The Battle of the Atlantic UK technical-history TV documentary, broadcast.  
 Nov: German Historical conference: *Ultra* enabled the Allied Battle victory: popular memory had already installed this as *the* reason.  
 LG Buchheim publishes factual photoessay U-Boat War, first of several reconstructionist works.

- 1979: Thatcher Conservative Government elected in UK; RN run down by successive policies focussing on continental defence.
- 1980: Irving's revised, "sanitised" PQ-17 published.  
Dönitz dies on Xmas Eve.
- 1981: Das Boot film, 2h10min, released. Dubbed English version has moderate international success; controversial in Germany & abroad from all sides due to accuracy, perspective, attitudes.  
Das Boot 300minTV miniseries broadcast, more controversy, but preferred by author.  
The Making of Das Boot TV documentary broadcast.
- 1982: Argentine invasion of Falklands prompts outburst of Thatcherite support, nationalism, & military operation to retake the Islands. RN & MN contributions raise awareness of Atlantic Battle, WAC, MN service in WW2: the road back. New sense of WW2 reminiscence also.
- 1985: Das Boot TV miniseries repeated in Germany.  
The Hunters & the Hunted mythological TV documentary, based on Brennecke's book, broadcast.  
Victories to Death mythological TV documentary by L.G Buchheim broadcast.  
The Submariners companion photo-essay book by L.G Buchheim published.
- 1987: Against England, controversial reconstructionist German TV documentary broadcast.
- 1989: Fall of the Berlin Wall, beginning of the end of the Cold War. 50th Anniversary era of WW2 commemorations begins, with just-preceding rise in volume of commemorative literature & awareness.
- 1990: Dunkirk & Blitz 50th Anniversary commemorations.  
The Grey Wolves counter-reconstructionist German TV doco broadcast.
- 1991: Controversial media coverage of UN coalition driving Iraqi forces from Kuwait.  
USSR disintegrates, end of Cold War.
- 1993: 50th Anniversary Official Commemorations of the climax of the Battle of the Atlantic, Liverpool, Clyde, Portsmouth; History Conferences in London, Moskva, & Washington-DC.  
HMS *Dasher* memorial conceived, constructed, dedicated: commemorative book published 1994.  
Dambusters 50th Anniversary official commemorations.
- 1994: Large-scale D-Day 50th Anniversary commemorations.  
Forgotten Heroes TV doco about Second World War seamen broadcast.  
"Dönitz: the Successor" episode of Hitler's Henchmen broadcast [ZDF/SBS].  
US TV Proudly We Served documentary about USN black Atlantic crew broadcast.
- 1995: VE-Day, VJ-Day 50th Anniversary commemorations.
- 1996: BBC broadcasts ASW Battle documentary episode as part of Decisive Weapons 12-part series.
- 1998: Das Boot Director's Cut, subtitled & enhanced, 3h20min, released.  
Preparations for 2000<sub>AD</sub> 50th Anniversary commemorations of the Korean War begin.
- 1999: Timothy Mulligan's Neither Sharks Nor Wolves indicates new scientific, analytical and countermythical directions in U-Boat and Battle research and narrative.
- 2000: U-571, straight US war-action film loosely based on actual events, premieres.

# APPENDIX II: CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF ATLANTIC WAR FILMS

YEAR:	UK:	US:	German [Other]:	Dom Fame	InterN Fame	Col:	Notes:
1940	Convoy For Freedom Neutral Port	Long Voyage Home		Y Y Y Y	N N N N	N N N N	pre-HX-84 <i>I Jervis Bay</i> action film. Doco-footage re-enactment of B.R.P. Stereotypical British maritime comedy. Play-based stories; well made & regarded.
1941	Ships With Wings 49 <sup>TH</sup> Parallel Merchant Seamen		U-Boats Westwards	N Y N Y	N Y N N	N N N N	Tedious <i>Ark Royal</i> aircrew & carrier story. Taut U-boat crew escape Canada story. Merchant Seaman's revenge tale: see <u>W.App.</u> Propaganda film; poor; better than 50s Ger.cin
1942	In Which We Serve Coastal Command Find, Fix, & Strike	Atlantic Convoy	69 <sup>TH</sup> Parallel (Sov)	Y N N N N	Y N N N N	N N N N N	Effective famed Mountbatten & <i>Kelly</i> biopic. <u>Target For Tonight</u> -style RAF story: Crown FU. FAA ditto, Ealing studio. Early US Atlantic Battle short film. Soviets & Allies meet up.....
1943	<i>SanDemetrio</i> : London	Close Quarters We Sail @ Midnight Action in the North Atlantic Lifeboat Corvette K225		Y N N Y Y Y	N N N N Y N	N N N N N N	taut eff. BoA tanker re-enactment-see <u>Convoy</u> . implaus. USN Atlantic submarine story. US equiv of <u>Convoy</u> & <u>Western Approaches</u> .  Bogart meets <u>Convoy</u> on Kola Run..... Semi-taut Hitchcock allegory. Hawks: Cv meets Ub & A/C in Atl + romance.
1944	<i>Western Approaches</i>			Y	N	Y	effective colour Brit BoA convoy story.
1948	<i>Whisky Galore</i>			Y	Y	N	novel-based Ealing comedy, peripheral but effective, well regarded & famed.
1952	<i>The Gift Horse</i>			Y	N	N	Conventional tale of ex-USN RN Destr in BoA.
	<i>The Cruel Sea</i>			Y	Y	N	v.successful, famous Brit BoA adapted novel.
1955	<i>Above Us The Waves</i>			Y	N	N	re-enactment of <i>X-craft</i> vs <i>Tirpitz</i> operation.
1956	<i>Battle of the River Plate</i>			Y	Y	Y	realistic colour re-enactment of B.R.P.
1957		The Enemy Below	Sharks & Little Fish	Y Y	Y N	Y N	Taut but implausible U-Bt vs destroyer story. German adaptation of poor mythical memoir.
1958	The Key		U-47--KpLt Prien	Y Y	N N	N N	Left-wing German countermythical bio-pic. Poor confused novel adap. Tug-skippers BoA.
1960	Sink The <i>Bismarck</i> !	Under 10 Flags		Y Y	N N	N N	stereotypical, stiff, archaic B&W reenactment. Muddled US Ger surface raider movie.
1967	<i>Submarine X-1</i>			N	N	Y	Recycled fictionalised <u>Above Us the Waves</u> .
1971	<i>Murphy's War</i>			N	N	Y	minimal Venuez. O'Toole MN star vehicle.
1981			Das Boot	Y	Y/N	Y	Solid modern Ger.adapted U-Boat novel.
1997			Das Boot Director's Cut	Y	Y/N	Y	Extended, enhanced restored; firmer anti-war & less action-toned film.
2000		U-571				Y	Loosely based on British events about captured U-Boat and Enigma machine.

NB: Dom= Domestic Fame &/or success;

Internat=International Fame &/or success;

Col = Colour.



## APPENDIX II: ATLANTIC BATTLE-RELATED DOCUMENTARIES & DRAMA BY YEAR

### DOCUMENTARIES:

Year	Title	Nat	Epis	Dur	Description
1952	<u>Victory at Sea</u>	US	7 of 25	30min	Famous music & narration; very widely remembered.
1960	<u>The Sea War</u>	UK	?	? ?	Contained episode scripted by J.Broome of PQ-17/TCS.
1973	<u>"Wolfpack" World@War</u>	UK	1 of 26	50min	preUltra; MN, RN, RCN, U-Boat, famous interviewees.
1978	<u>Battle of the Atlantic</u>	UK	1 of 6	49min	Ultra-era weaponry, sensors, & Enigma technical doco.
1985	<u>Hunters &amp; the Hunted</u>	Ger	-----	54min	Mythical pro-U-Boat from book by Brennecke.
	<u>Victories to Death</u>	Ger	-----	1h19	by Buchheim, more war experiences. Anti H&H.
1987	<u>Against England</u>	Ger	-----	1h45	Balanced & nonmythical; but promotions mythical.
1990	<u>The Grey Wolves</u>	Ger	-----	54min	Reactionary counter-Buchheim counter-L-Wing response.
	<u>The Atlantic War</u>	US	-----	50min	Interviews & Archival footage from US participants view.
1994	<u>Forgotten Heroes</u>	UK	-----	50min	Mythical traumatic multinational MN experiences.
	<u>"Dönitz": Hitler's H'men:</u>	Ger	1 of 6	50min	Biased, ahistorical; misuses famous interviewees.
	<u>Proudly We Served</u>	US	-----	58min	Limited, mythical USN-backed black USN Service.
	<u>Codebreakers</u>	US	-----	50min	Purple & Ultra history & use; Kahn: postUltra era.
1995	<u>The Black Pit</u>	Can	-----	48min	Story of Convoy SC-107 & negligence of RCN escort.
1996	<u>"Battle of the Atlantic"</u>	UK	1 of 12	26min	BBC semi-mythical technical doco: vdVat. Topp, others.
1998	<u>"Ultra"</u>	US	1 of 52	49min	Massive US Commercial series <u>Secrets of War</u> : repetitive.
1998	<u>"Battle of the Atlantic"</u>	US	1 of 52	49min	1 of follow-on intelligence/tech-history episodes to "Ultra".

German documentaries except Hitler's Henchmen have not been seen outside Germany; therefore their influence has been slight & penetration minimal, save within Germany's U-Boat debate.

English-Language documentaries = 12 of 17 or 706%, so less penetration than overall numbers would suggest.

### DRAMA:

1965	<u>Convoy</u>	US	13	50mins	"Uninteresting war series with chill wind of failure about it." Only known TV drama series to involve the Battle of the Atlantic, from US escorts & merchant ship's points of view. Grim, depressing, and cancelled.
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1. Halliwell, L. Halliwell's Teleguide. 1<sup>st</sup> Edn, Granada TV UK, 1979.

The Tower Hill Memorial, London lists 37,701 British merchant seamen of both world wars without known graves.

The American Memorial, Cambridge.

1,371 US Navy & 201 US Coast Guard men lost in the Battle are named on the right wall.  
Almost all US Merchant Marine seamen are without a specific memorial.

Pages from Lloyds War Losses

The dead of *Inverlane* and *San Adolfo* among other ships on the Tower Hill memorial.

Notable beside *San Adolfo* is the far more famous *San Demetrio*, the subject of a wartime book and film.

The crewmembers of *Oakcrest* lost at sea commemorated at Tower Hill.

Merchant Navy graves among Royal Navy and Air Force at a small cemetery outside Portsmouth, 1941.

The typ-VIIC *U-995* at rest outside Laboë, near Kiel. Inset: *U-995* being lifted into position, 1970.

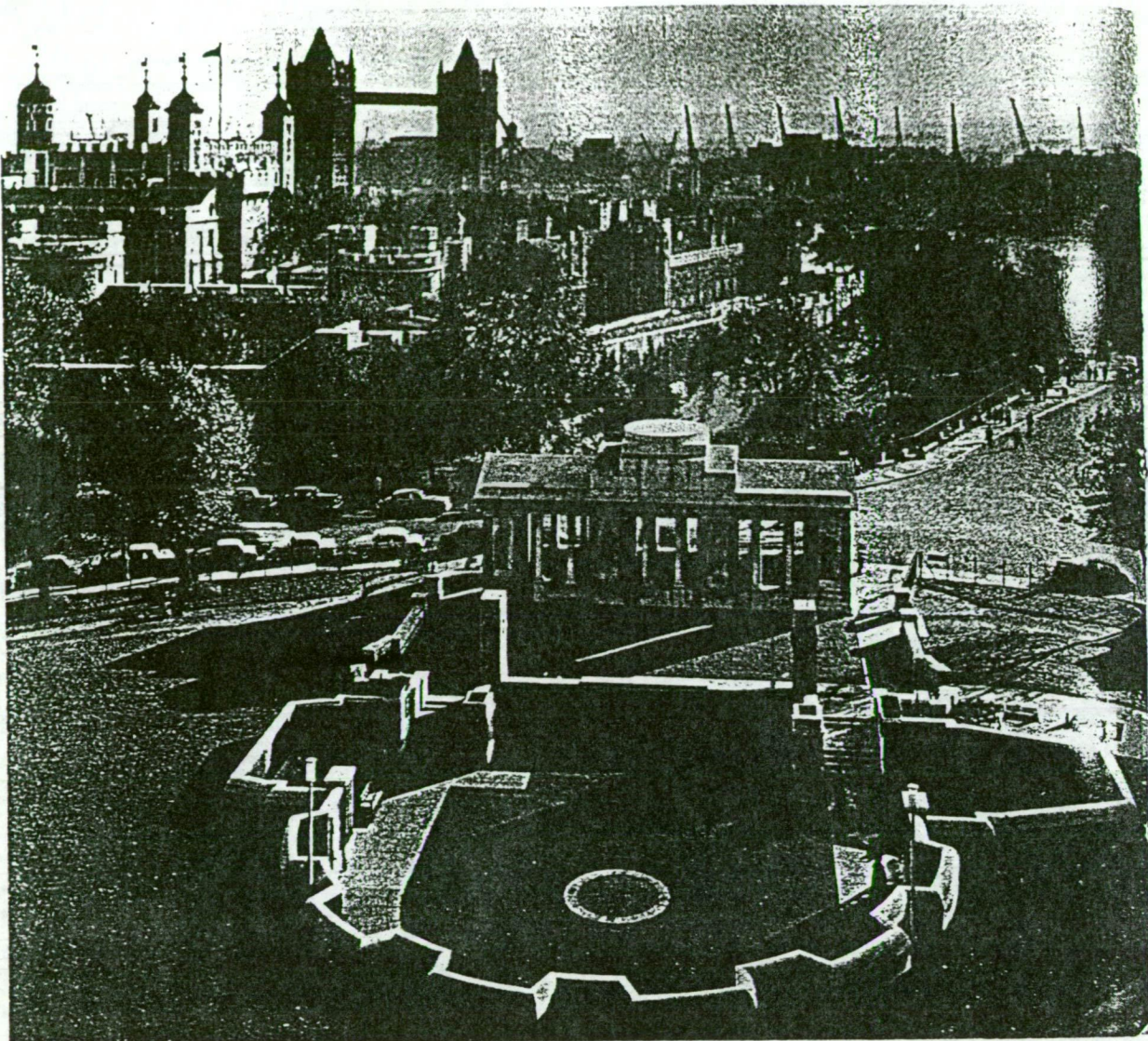
Behind is the first brick tower memorial to U-Boat men killed in the Great War.

The U-Boat crew memorial at Möltenort outside Kiel. 28,728 killed in action and 1,275 of other causes are named here.

Australia's Merchant Navy dead. Until 1999 only entries on an alcove database, and general plaques commemorating seamen, war correspondents, nurses and munitions workers mentioned them.

Today they have a deliberately separated 'Garden of Remembrance', 20% in error in overall numbers, outside the AWM's Roll of Honour building. Discrimination and inter-service rivalry are perpetuated.



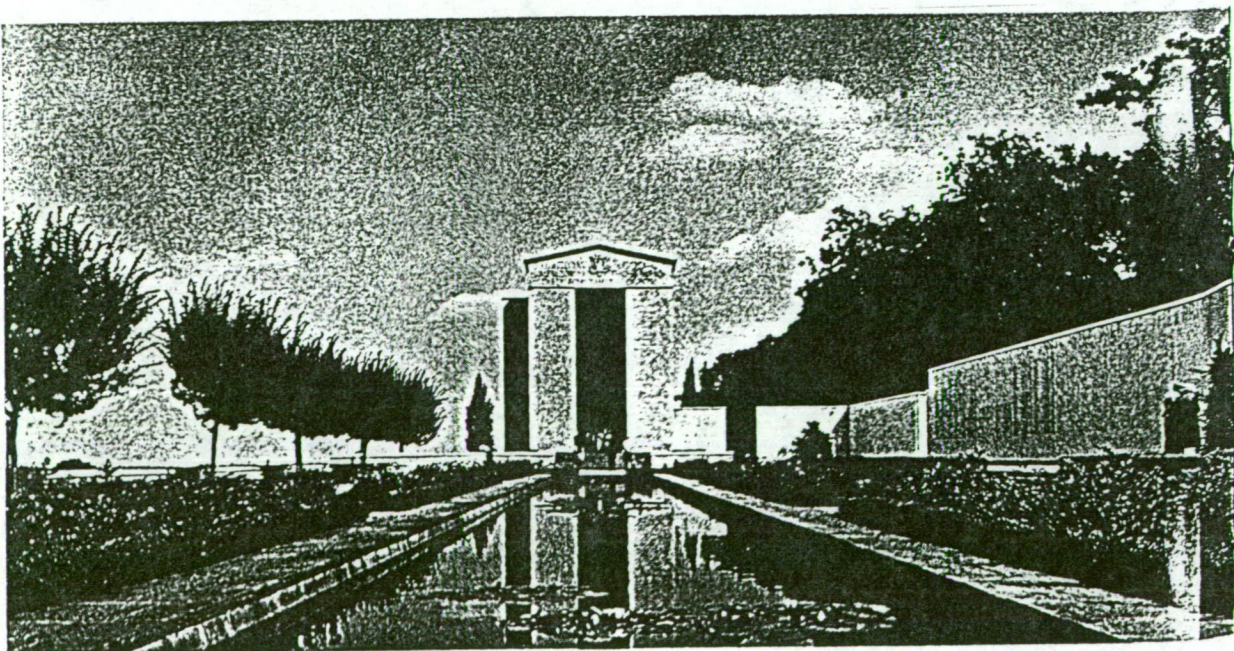


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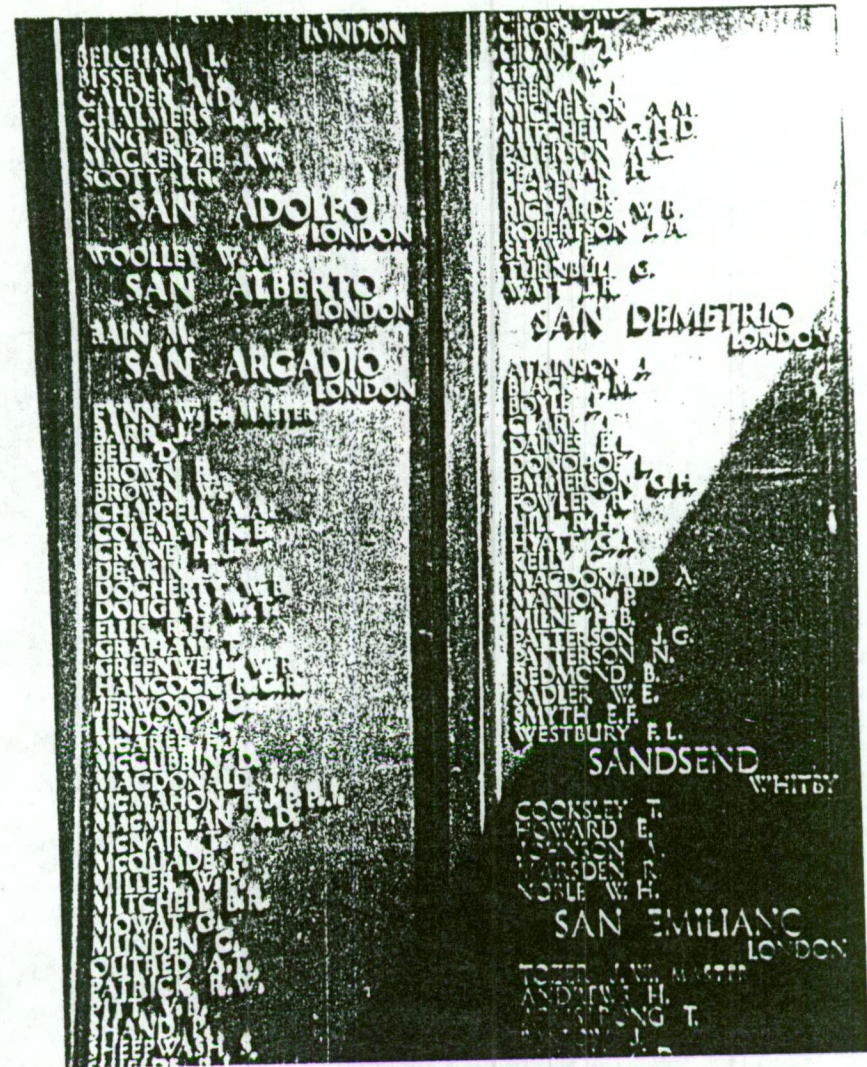
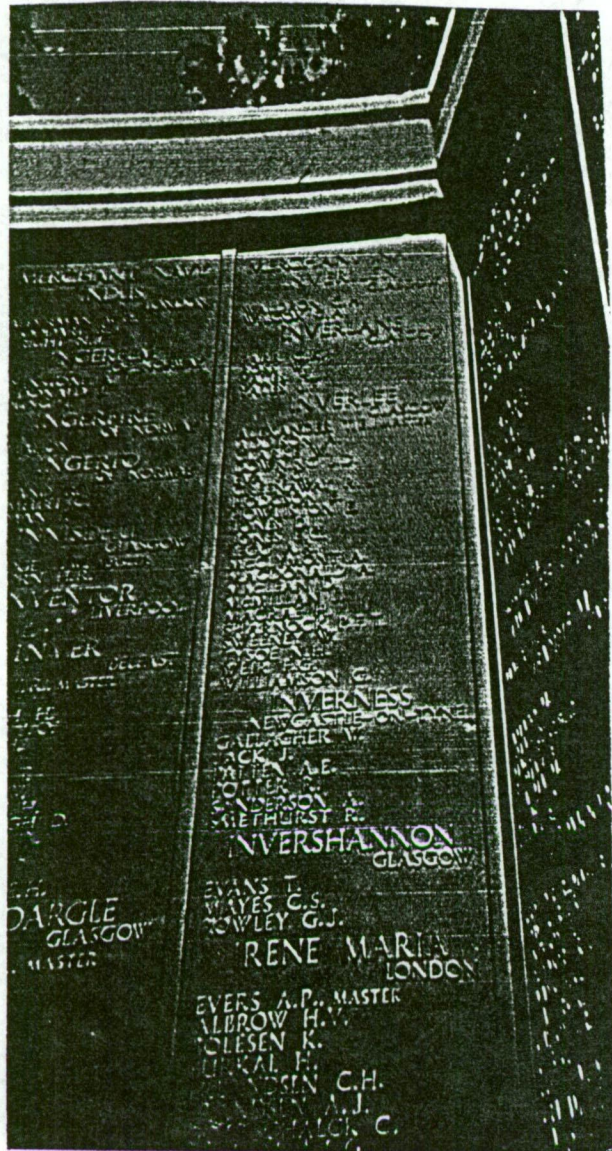
Almost all US Merchant Marine seamen are without a specific memorial.





DATE	VESSEL	FLAG	TONS GROSS	VOYAGE	CARGO	POSITION	HOW	PERSONNEL	REMARKS
12	KING ROBERT (m.v.)	BR	4535	Tyne for Port Said.	7500 tons coal.	4 miles S.W. of Haisboro L.V.	M.	1 lost.	Wreck dispersed.
12	NARVIK HEAD	BR	496	Boness for London.	Coal.	1/2 mile S. of N. Caister Buoy.	M.	5 lost.	
12	TORO	SW	1467	Malmo for Ronnskar.	1770.650 metric tons quartz.	In the Kogrundsranan, or between Trelleborg and Falsterbo.	M.		Wreck broke up.
13	DEPTFORD	BR	4101	Narvik for --	6000 tons iron ore.	1/4 mile N.N.W. of Honningsvaagstadt, in lat. 62 12 N.	S.	31 lost.	
13	ROSA	BR	1146	From Tyne --	--	6 1/2 miles off Tyne Break- water. * or 12 miles off N.E. coast U.K.	M.	1 lost.	
13	WILLIAM HALLET (s.trlr) H.M.S.	BR	202	--	--	Tyne area.	M.	1 survivor.	
14	INVERIANE (m.tank)	BR	9141	Abadan for Invergordon.	12634 tons fuel oil.	55 5 N., 17 W.	M.	4 lost.	Beached near Whit- burn Steel; broken in two. Forepart refloated & towed Tyne, and Scapa. Later towed Longhope and beached. Refloated May 20, 1944 prepared as blockship and sunk in position May 30, 1944.
15	GERMAINE	GR	5217	Albany (N.Y) for Cork.	Maize.	51 N., 12 18 W.	S.	Crew saved.	
15	H.C. FLOOD	NO	1907	Hull for Oslo.	Coke.	Off Tyne.	M.		
15	RAGNI	NO	1264	Hull for Malmo.	Coal.	Off Tyne.	M.	6 missing.	
15	STRINDHEIM	NO	321	Narvik for Hull.	Ferro-chrome	Off Tyne.	M.	9 lost.	
15	URSUS	SW	1499	Uddavalla for Rochester.	Woodpulp.	51 35 N., 136 5 E.	M.	9 lost.	Wreck lies in 51 33 1 N., 123 3 E. To be dispersed.

The dead of *Inverlane* and *San Adolfo* among other ships on the Tower Hill memorial.  
Notable beside *San Adolfo* is the far more famous *San Demetrio*, the subject of a wartime book and film.



N O V E M B E R 1 9 4 0.

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>VESSEL</u>	<u>FLAG</u>	<u>TONS GROSS</u>	<u>VOYAGE</u>	<u>CARGO</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>PERSONNEL</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
22	JUSTITIA	Br	4562	Savannah and Sydney N.S. for London.	5161 tons lumber, 2248 tons steel, 40 tons turps, 300 tons sundries.	In approx. 55 N., 13 10 W. S.		Crew 38 and 1 gunner. 13 crew lost.	Presumed sunk. Last seen November 23 at 12.5 a.m B.S.T.
22	OAKCREST	Br	5407	Liverpool for New York.	In ballast.	In about 53 N., 17 W.	S.	Crew 40 and 1 gunner. 35 lost.	
22	PIKEPOOL	Br	3683	Glasgow for Barry.	In ballast.	23 miles E.S.E. of Smalls. M.		Crew 31 and 1 gunner. 16 crew and gunner lost.	
23	ANTEN	Sw	5135	Liverpool for South Africa.	In ballast.	56 57 N., 18 18 W.	S.	32 crew saved, 1 lost.	On November 25 in 57 15 N., 17 40 W., with heavy list. Presumed sunk.
23	BRUSE	No	2205	Nelson, N.B. for Ipswich.	1550 tons lumber.	55 4 N., 12 15 W.	S.	Crew 22, 16 lost.	Forepart seen on Nov. 24 in 55 39 N. 11 31 W., & on Nov. 25 in 55 31 N., 11 29 W., and was picked up by tug on Nov. 28 in 55 45 N., 8 41 W., & arrived Clyde Nov. 30. Delivered to shipbreakers at Troon in June, 1941.
23	BONAPARTE (tug)	Br	38	--	--	Near Northam Bridge, Southampton.	A.		
23	BUSSUM	Du	3636	Montreal for Belfast.	About 5200 tons grain.	55 39 N., 8 58 W.	S.	29 survivors landed.	Later reported in 55 37 N., 8 42 W. Sank November 24.
23	KING IDWAL	Br	5115	Liverpool for Baltimore.	In ballast.	56 44 N., 19 13 W. (Master) 56 42 N., 19 14 W.	S.	Crew 40, 12 lost.	



NYTHOLM OF NORWAY

O. A. KNUDSEN  
OF NORWAY

WILL G.  
OAKBANK  
GLASGOW

STEWART J. MASTER  
DUNCAN L.N.  
INNIS-SM L.L.  
MACMILLAN A.S.  
P.T. C.N.  
LYSON H.L.

OAKCREST  
LONDON

DYER S.G. MASTER  
ALEXANDER T.A.  
ANDERSON A.C.  
BULCHART E.T.  
CADDICK A.G.  
CARR E.  
CLINACK T.  
DAVIS J.  
DIXON J.R.  
ELDER M.P.  
FORBES S.  
HALL J.  
HARRISON H.  
HAWES C.  
MCDONOUGH M.  
MACKINNON I.  
MACLEOD E.  
MCLOUGHLIN J.  
MCNAMARA C.  
MOHAMA S.  
OBRIEN T.  
PEMBERTON W.C.  
PULL C.H.  
REINWALD H.  
SULLIVAN T.

OAKGROVE  
GLASGOW

FALCONER W.D. MASTER  
OBSERVER  
LIVERPOOL

DAVIDSON J. MASTER  
BULPETT W.  
DAVIES T.  
DYCKINSON A.M.  
FRITH T.  
JOHNSTON R.W. Y.  
JONES E.  
LEYLAND S.  
MAGNIE J.J.  
MILFORD E.M.  
LYSON J.E.

OCEAN CRUISER

PARRY F.W.  
ARMSTRONG T.P.  
BELL T.  
BRAXTON C.L.  
BROWN J.F.  
CLARK G.  
COOK H.A.  
COOK T.  
COLINSELL C.  
DADDS J.A.  
DALEY A.J.  
DAVIES E.L.  
EDWARDS J.  
FARRUGIA  
GLASS H.  
GOBBS W.H.  
HUNTER A.  
JOHN A.H.  
JONES W.  
LASING S.R.  
MCAREE N.T.  
MCCORMACK J.  
MCLEAN T.  
MCNIE A.  
MALLEY J.  
MARTIN R.  
MATTHEW S.R.  
MINTON W.J.  
MOSTLEY C.  
ORRIS J.  
O'DEA M.  
PACKER R.  
PREECE T.J.  
SHEEHAN R.  
SMITH H.E.  
THOMAS H.  
THOMSON J.E.  
TOVEY S.G.  
VAUGHAN W.C.  
WALKER T.  
WARD R.  
WEAVER G.A.  
WILLIAMSON  
WILLIAMSON  
YATES H.C.

OCEAN

EDWARDS J.C.

OCEAN

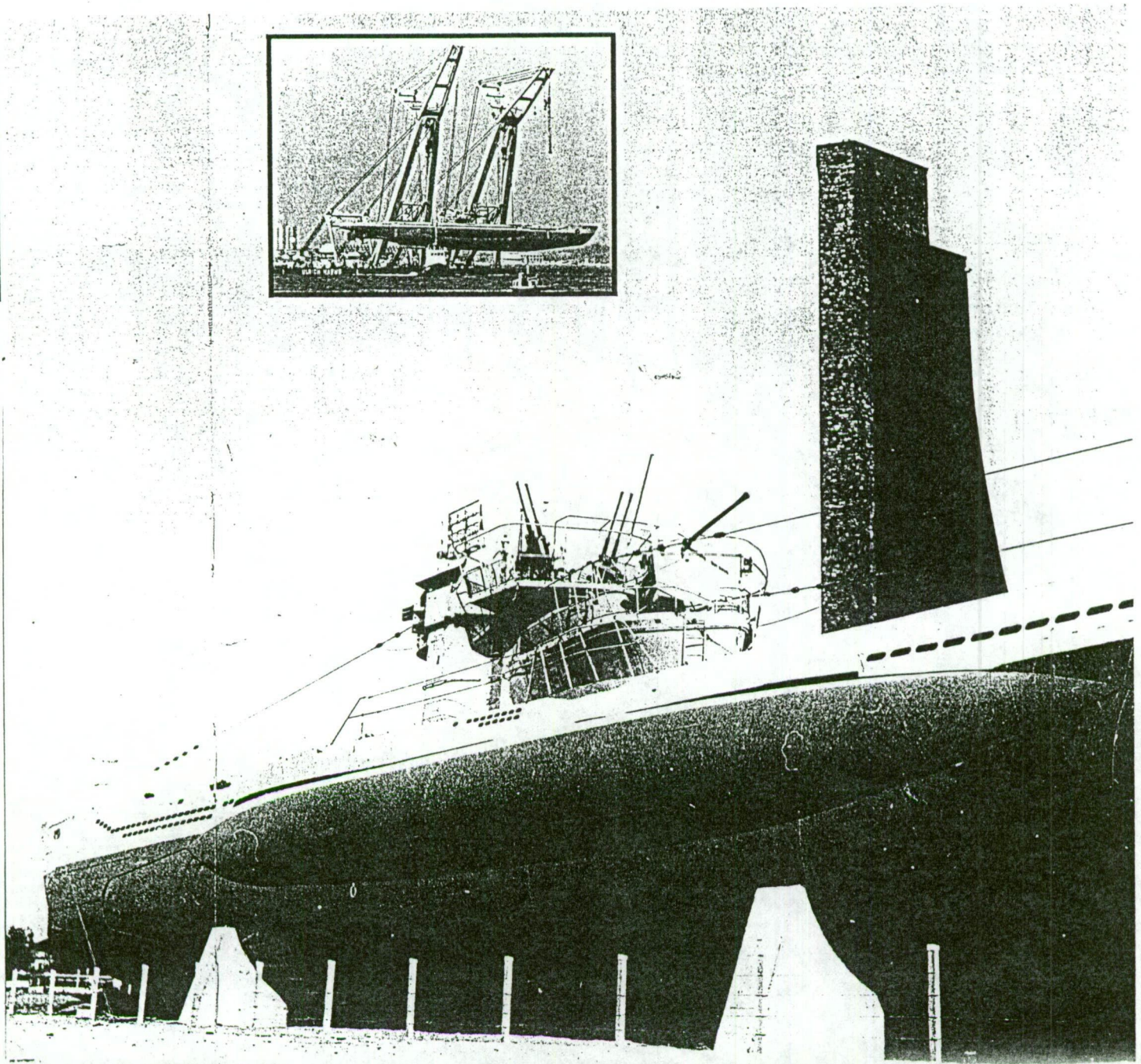
The crewmembers of Oakcrest lost at sea commemorated at Tower Hill.





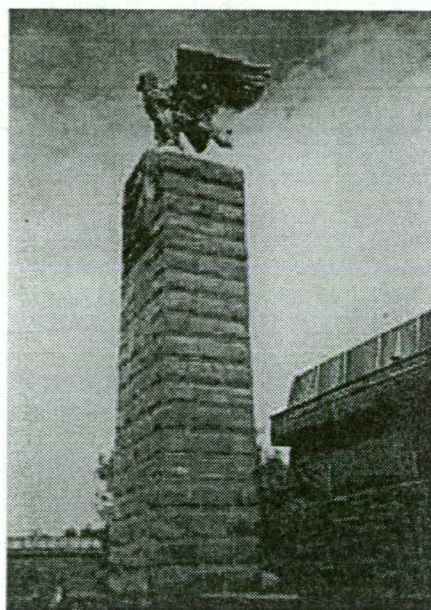
Merchant Navy graves among Royal Navy and Air Force at a small cemetery outside Portsmouth, 1941.



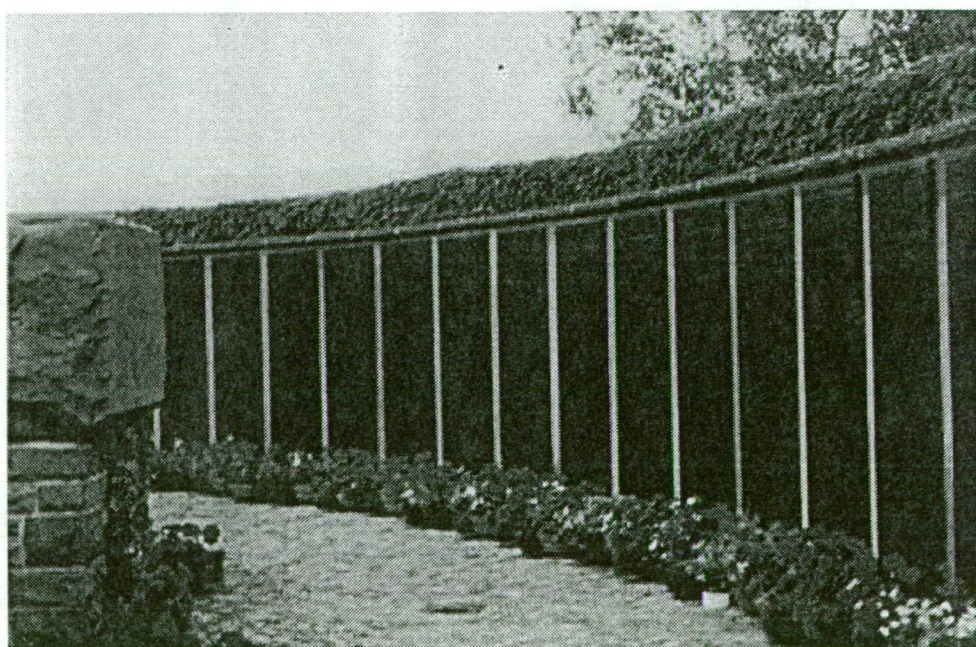


The typ-VIIC U-995 at rest outside Laboë, near Kiel. Inset:: U-995 being lifted into position, 1970.  
Behind is the first brick tower memorial to U-Boat men killed in the Great War.



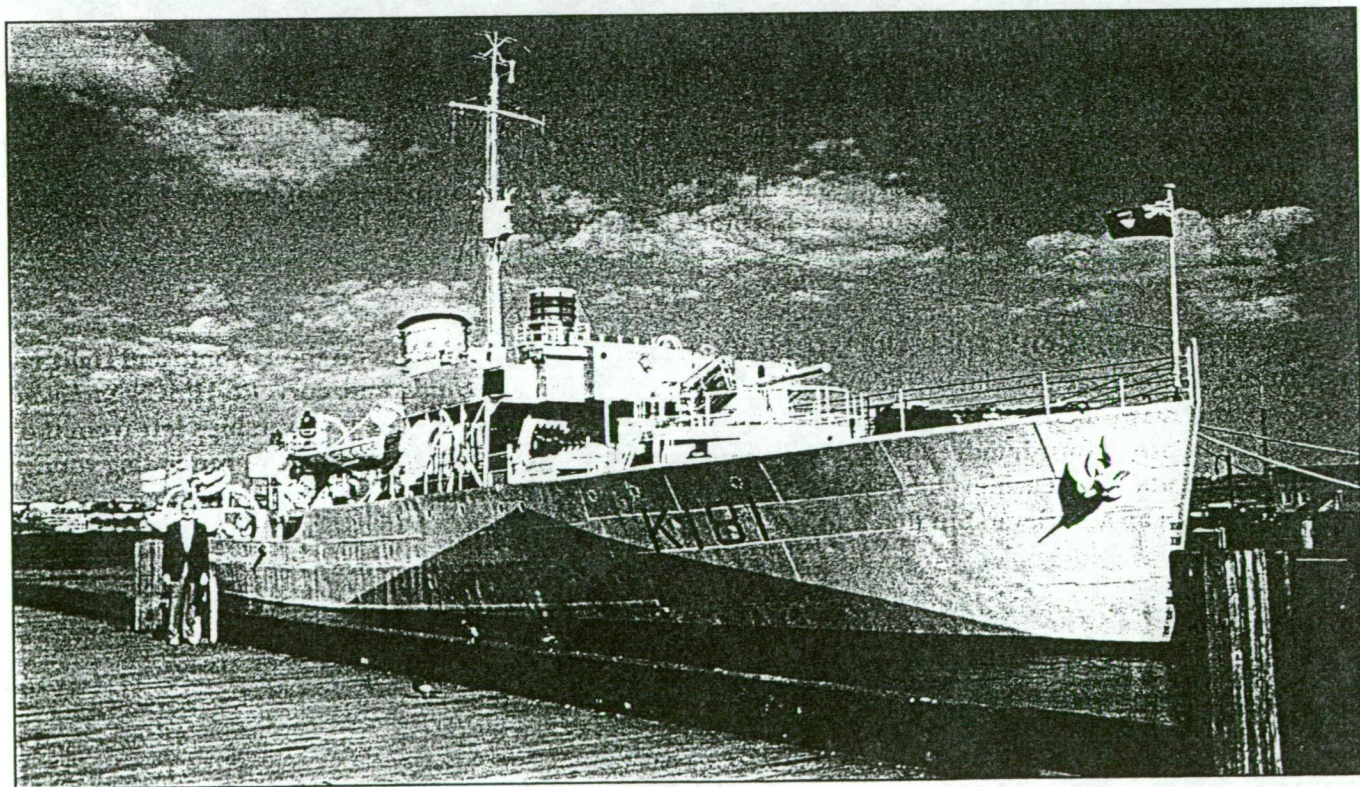
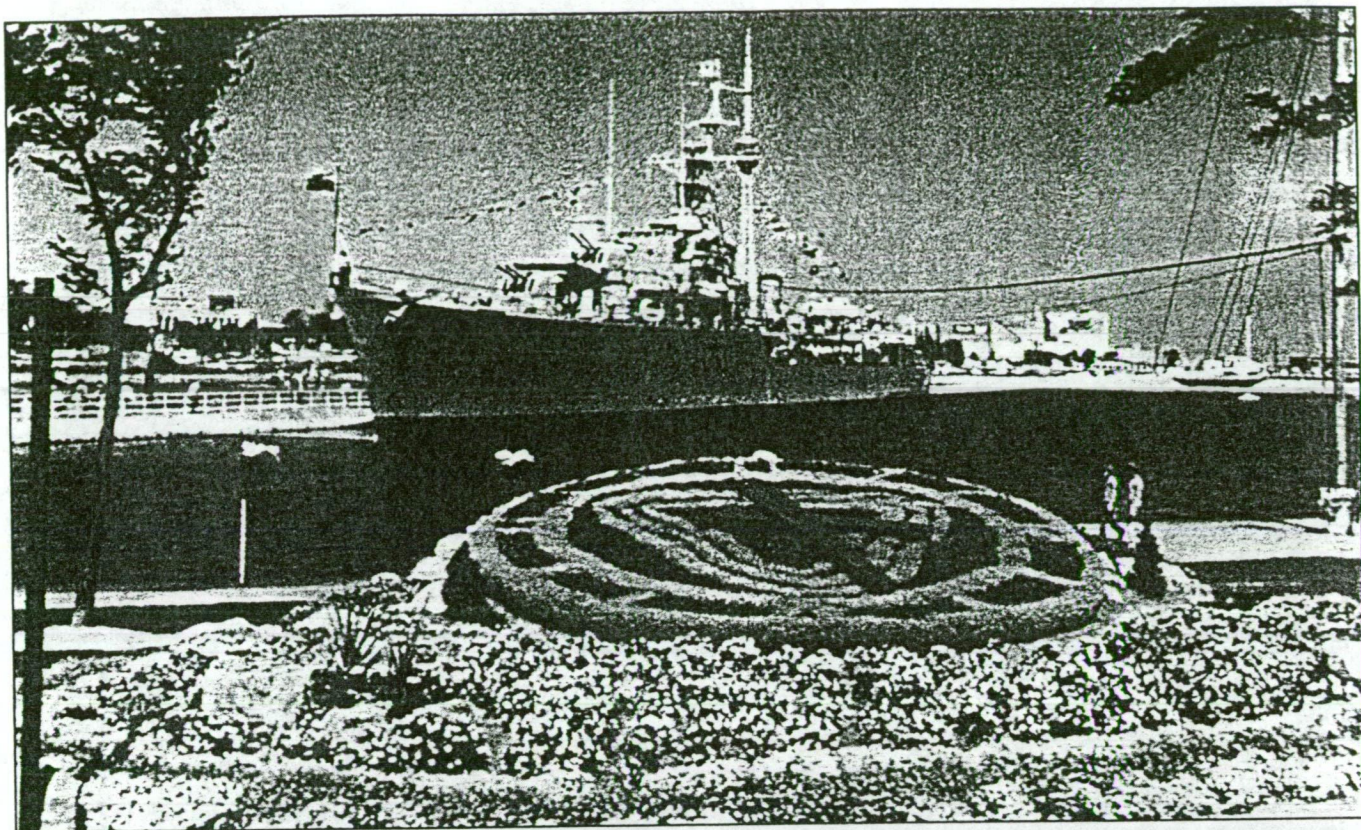


The U-Boat crew memorial at Möltenort outside Kiel. 28,728 killed in action and 1,275 of other causes are named here.





## The Longest Battle



**THE LAST TWO SHIPS OF THE WARTIME NAVY:** In their permanent homes on the Toronto and Halifax waterfronts the heritage warships (following page) destroyer HMCS *Haida* and corvette HMCS *Sackville* with G-63 and K-181 their wartime pendant numbers on their hulls. As the last two warships left from the giant fleet of close to four hundred RCN ships at the war's end, they are open to visitors, reminding young and old of Canada's great achievement at sea half a century ago. The young who cannot remember are able to move through an actual warship that had fought in the longest battle.



# THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. JAMES / TORONTO

CONGREGATION



FOUNDED IN 1797

THEIR HONOURS GATHERED

1943



1993

AND THEIR DUTY DONE

## COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

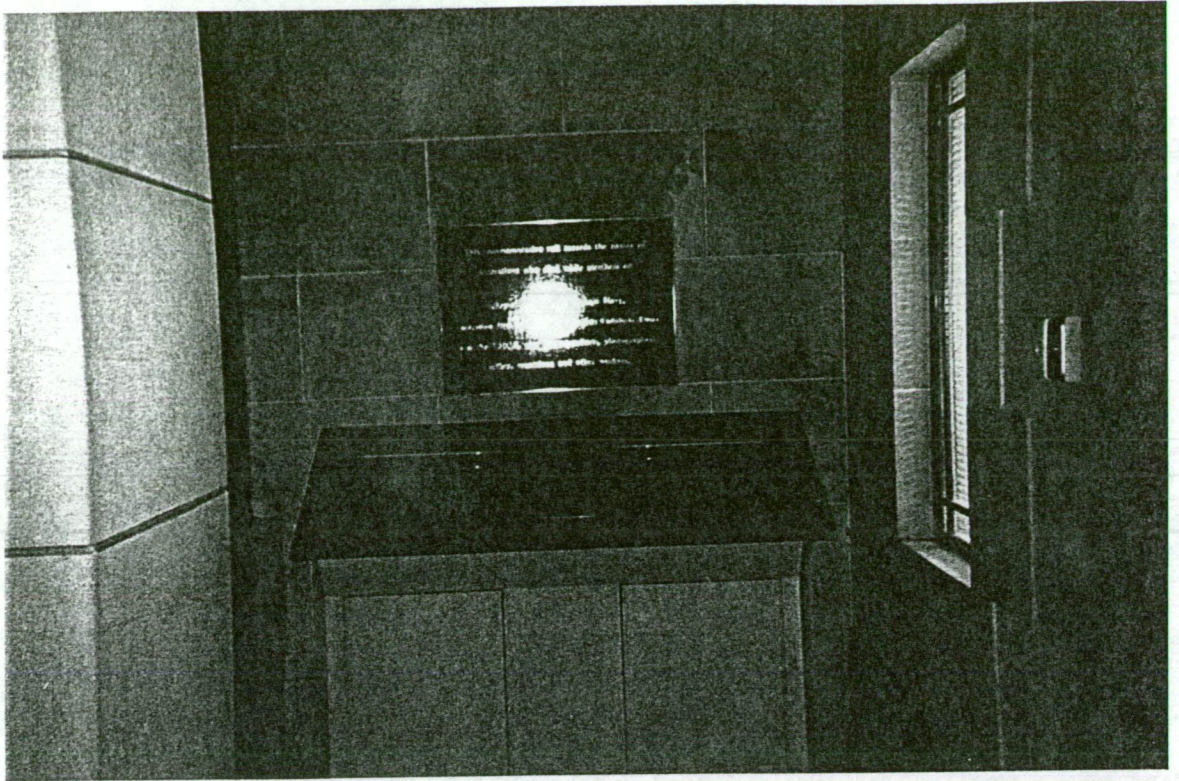
At this 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic Church Parade, it is a privilege and solemn duty to thank God for our heritage of freedom and for the courage and determination, even unto death, of so many who were wounded or gave their lives in this terrible contest. We hold in reverent memory the following ships lost in World War II and their companies:

HMCS Alberni  
HMCS Bras D'or  
HMCS Chedabucto  
HMCS Esquimaux  
HMCS Guysborough  
HMCS Louisburg  
HMCS Ottawa  
HMCS Raccoon  
HMC M.T.B.'s 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 465, 466 - Ships of the Merchant Navy.

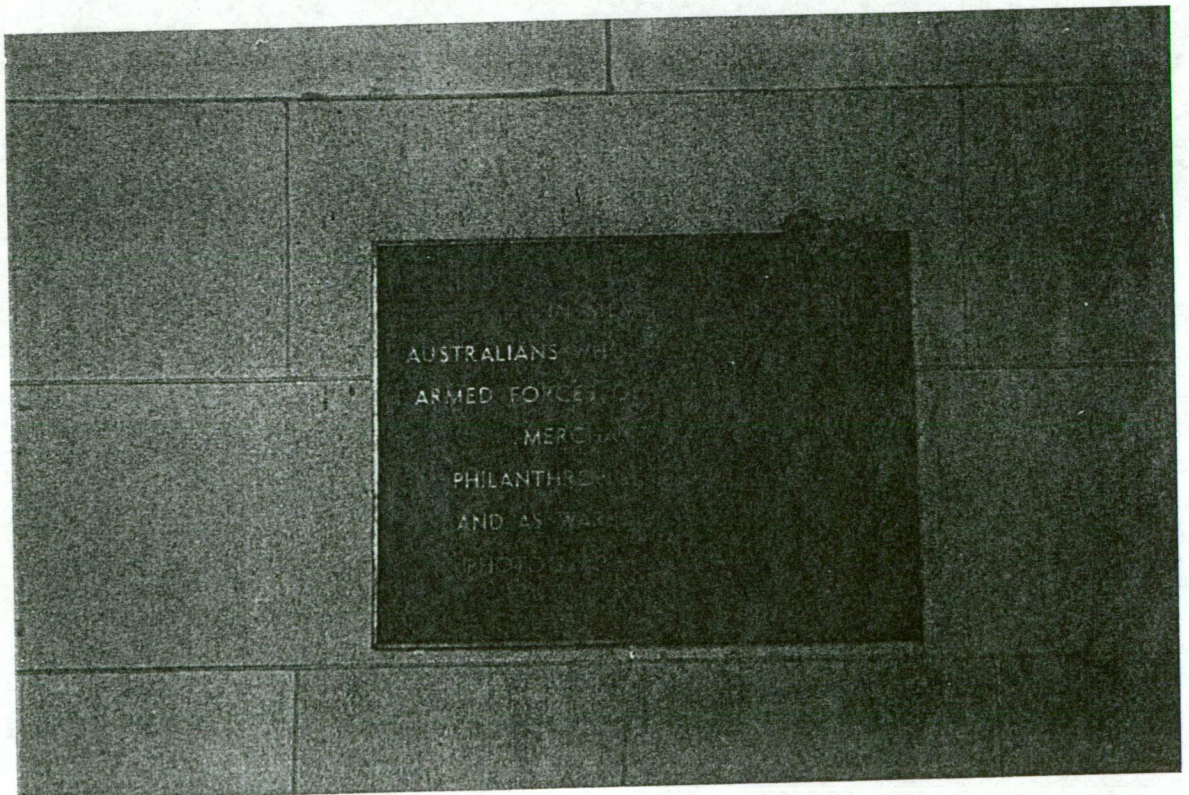
HMCS St. Croix  
HMCS Skeena  
HMCS Trentonian  
HMCS Weyburn  
HMCS Athabasca  
HMCS Charlottetown  
HMCS Clayaquot  
HMCS Fraser

HMCS Levis  
HMCS Margaree  
HMCS Otter  
HMCS Regina  
HMCS Shawinigan  
HMCS Spikenard  
HMCS Valleyfield  
HMCS Windflower





Australia's Merchant Navy dead. Until 1999 only entries on an alcove database, and general plaques commemorating seamen, war correspondents, nurses and munitions workers mentioned them.



Today they have a deliberately separated 'Garden of Remembrance', 20% in error in overall numbers, outside the AWM's Roll of Honour building. Discrimination and inter-service rivalry are perpetuated.



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