

## **THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC**

On September 3rd, 1939, the German Navy received a signal to open hostilities with England at once. Seven hours later, the passenger liner SS Athenia was sunk by submarine U-30. Thus began a running battle that lasted until the final day of the Second World War in the European theatre. Canada declared war against Germany on September 10th, 1939 and the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Merchant Navy joined the battle.

The Battle of the Atlantic pitted Allied naval and air forces against the notorious German submarine “wolf-packs”, whose prey were the convoys of merchant ships carrying valuable war material and personnel across the ocean. It was a bitter struggle. Although the Battle of the Atlantic was fought at sea, it touched the life of virtually every Canadian. Not only did men and women from across the country serve in the Navy, Air Force and Merchant Navy, but the overseas trade they were defending was vital to Canada. In order to preserve this critical trade and build up the supplies necessary for victory, it was essential that the convoys reach their destinations.

The Battle of the Atlantic ended with V-E Day on May 8th, 1945. During the long bitter struggle, the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force had participated in the escort of at least 200 million tons of shipping and had sunk 52 U-boats. The battle however, had been costly to Canada. Merchant ship losses totalled over 70 and 34 Canadian warships were lost. Fatal casualties in the Merchant Navy amounted to over 1700, in the Navy to over 2000, and in the Air Force to more than 900.

Canadian ships and seamen, and the naval and air forces used for the defence of shipping, may well have made the most important of all Canadian contributions in the Second World War. The Battle of the Atlantic is thus an important element in the nation’s history and is remembered with respect in the Canadian navy, air force and merchant marine.

**Let us remember ...**

**HMCS FRASER**

**HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN**

**HMCS REGINA**

**HMCS BRAS D'OR**

**HMCS OTTAWA**

**HMCS ALBERNI**

**HMCS MARGAREE**

**HMCS LOUISBOURG**

**HMCS SKEENA**

**HMCS OTTER**

**HMCS WEYBURN**

**HMCS SHAWININGAN**

**HMCS LEVIS**

**HMCS ST CROIX**

**HMCS CLAYOQUOT**

**HMCS WINDFLOWER**

**HMCS CHEDABUCTO**

**HMCS TRENTONIAN**

**HMCS SPIKENARD**

**HMCS ATHABASKAN**

**HMCS GUYSBOROUGH**

**HMCS RACoon**

**HMCS VALLEYFIELD**

**HMCS ESQUIMALT**

**HMCS YPRES**

**NCSM ADVERSUS**

**HARBOUR DEFENCE CRAFT D-15**

**MTB 459**

**MTB 460**

**MTB 461**

**MTB 462**

**MTB 463**

**MTB 465**

**MTB 466**

**Let us remember:**

**5 SQUADRON**

**8 SQUADRON**

**10 SQUADRON**

**11 SQUADRON**

**113 SQUADRON**

**116 SQUADRON**

**117 SQUADRON**

**119 SQUADRON**

**145 SQUADRON**

**160 SQUADRON**

**161 SQUADRON**

**162 SQUADRON**

**404 SQUADRON**

**405 SQUADRON**

**407 SQUADRON**

**413 SQUADRON**

**415 SQUADRON**

**422 SQUADRON**

**423 SQUADRON**



**Battle of the Atlantic Sunday commemorates the sacrifices of sailors, merchant seaman, Royal Canadian Air Force and Canadian Army personnel who gave their lives in the North Atlantic.**