

ATLANTIC 1939-1945: THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

Telegram from Prime Minister Winston Churchill to US President Truman June 1945

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Extract a

With the surrender of Germany the Battle of the Atlantic has ended; German U-boats have ceased to operate and are now proceeding under Allied Orders.

Beginning in September 1939 it has been a long and relentless struggle; a struggle demanding not only the utmost courage, daring and endurance, but also the highest scientific and technical skill.

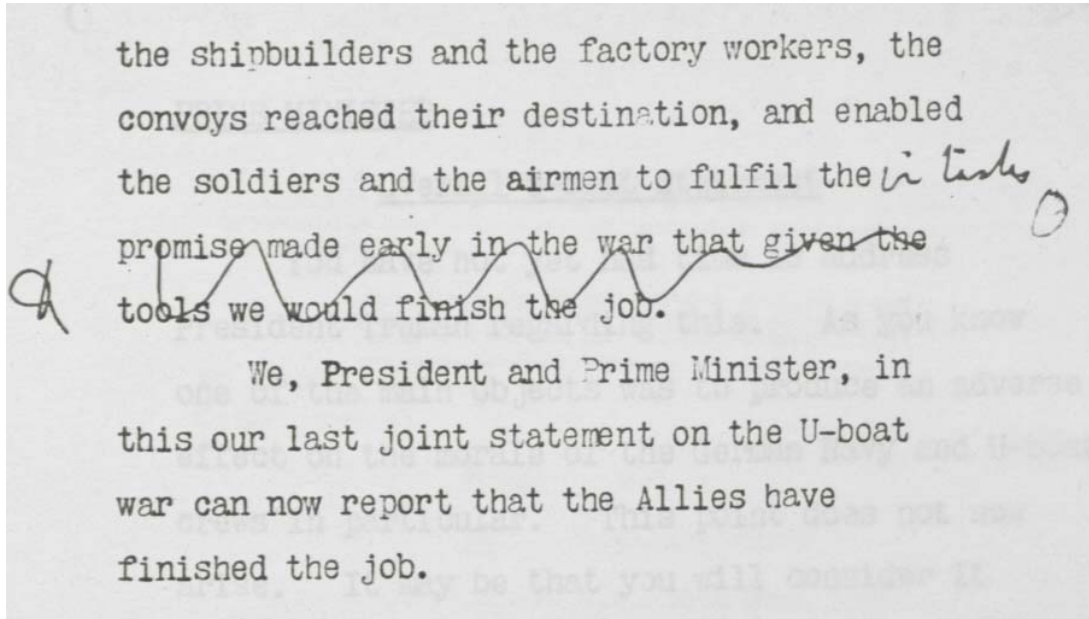
Germany's object was to cut the Allied sea communications, upon which the maintenance of the Allied war effort depended. This included the movements and supply of armies and air forces during successful campaigns in four continents.

Losses have been heavy both in lives and materials; at the peak in 1941 and 1942 the issue of the struggle hung in the balance. On the other hand over 700 U-boats have been sunk and many others have been destroyed by the Germans themselves in the final stage. Most of these successes have been achieved by the combined Allied naval and air forces working in the closest co-operation; others are due to mines laid from aircraft and ships; others to bombing in harbour, and a few U-boats were lost by marine dangers.

But success was achieved. Thanks to the sailors and airmen, the scientists and technicians,

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Extract b



What is this source?

This source is part of a series of telegrams which the President of the USA and Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent each other during the course of the Battle of the Atlantic.

For most of the war the US President was Franklin D Roosevelt. He died in April 1945 and was replaced by Harry Truman.

It's worth knowing that...

This source was one of a series of joint statements that the Prime Minister and President drafted and then published to their countries. It gives some indication of the importance of the Battle of the Atlantic that they concentrated so much time and effort on it.

By the time this statement was read out the war against Germany was over. The war against Japan continued until September 1945.



Learning Curve

WORLD WAR II

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How will you use this source?

1. What qualities brought victory in the Battle of the Atlantic?
2. According to Churchill, what weapons and tactics deserved credit?
3. What types of people does he praise?
4. Does this source help you to explain why the Battle of the Atlantic was so significant?