

## ATLANTIC 1939-1945: THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

**CAN YOU RAISE THE CASH FOR THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC  
MUSEUM?****Extract from German radio propaganda broadcast to Britain in  
December 1941**

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Courtesy of Imperial War Museum, London.

In November alone, the German forces sank the following British naval units: one aircraft carrier, one cruiser, three destroyers and a number of smaller vessels. They damaged two battleships including the Prince of Wales, the Repulse and the seaplane carrier Unicorn, of 14,500 tons. That's only a part of the price paid for the attempt to wage naval warfare on the Churchillian scale.

Losses of this rate render far more difficult the task of the British commanders in solving every problem that the war presents. Naval power for Britain is not an independent function. It is an indispensable aspect of her war potential as a whole.

The United States are compact. The defence of their territory in the North American continent is no difficult matter. But the British Empire is scattered all over the world and is incomparably more assailable than the USA. What [President] Roosevelt may lose in the Pacific is small in comparison with what Britain stands to lose.

Even India is threatened. Canada is practically an American dominion, ruled by Roosevelt. The fate of Australia and New Zealand hangs in the balance.

The Royal Air Force is too weak. The Royal Navy is too weak. And as yet, the common sense of the British people is too weak to perceive the catastrophic nature of the plight into which they have allowed Churchill to lead them.

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### What is this source?

This is a radio broadcast by William Joyce. Joyce was a naturalised Englishman, living in Germany, and a loyal supporter of Hitler. He regularly sent out broadcasts that always began with "This is Germany calling..."

His aim was to undermine support in Britain for the war and he frequently urged the British to surrender. The nickname "Lord Haw Haw" was a joke on his drawling accent made by a Daily Express journalist but it became so well known that even German announcers would sometimes introduce him as "Lord Haw Haw".

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### What's the background to this source?

During the Battle of the Atlantic German U-Boats and aircraft tried to cut off Britain's supply lines across the Atlantic. The years 1941 and 1942 were the worst years in the Battle of the Atlantic. In 1941 the British and their Allies lost 1300 ships and in 1942 they lost 1661 ships. By late 1942 Britain was only able to import about one third of the goods it normally imported in peacetime.

The tide began to turn in 1943. By that time British code breakers were able to read many German naval signals. There were also effective new weapons against U-Boats such as depth charges.

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### It's worth knowing that...

There is not much evidence that Joyce's broadcasts seriously undermined British morale. However, there is some evidence that early in the war people did listen to his broadcasts. As the war went well for Germany in the early years, the propaganda could be fairly accurate. Many people listened to Lord Haw Haw to see if there were any clues about German bombing attacks.

William Joyce was executed for treason at the end of the war.

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### How will you use this source?

1. How does Joyce try and convince listeners that the war is going badly for Britain?
2. Do you think that anything that he says is likely to be true?
3. Why do think he has decided to broadcast on the war at sea?

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4. What do you think he might be trying to achieve by discussing differences between the USA and the British Empire?
5. Does this source help you to explain why the Battle of the Atlantic was so significant?

Use this [report table](#) to help plan your report