

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

**A telegram sent by US President Roosevelt to Prime Minister Churchill, November 1943**

Catalogue ref: PREM 3/413/4

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

OUR OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION AND NAVY DEPARTMENT RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT, WITH WHICH I AGREE:

[ 1. DURING THE MONTHS OF AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER APPROXIMATELY 60 UBOATS WERE DESTROYED. THIS BRINGS TO MORE THAN 150 THE NUMBER OF UBOATS DESTROYED DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS. THE RECORD OF THE LAST THREE MONTHS IS PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING BECAUSE DURING MOST OF THIS PERIOD FEWER UBOATS WERE OPERATING. FEWER TARGETS WERE PRESENTED FOR OUR AIR AND SEA FORCES.

2. DURING AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER MORE UBOATS WERE DESTROYED THAN ALLIED MERCHANT SHIPS WERE SUNK BY UBOAT ACTION. THE RATIO OF UBOAT TO MERCHANT SHIP ATTRITION DURING DURING OCTOBER WAS MORE SATISFACTORY THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS MONTH. ~~IN-~~FACT, OUR TONNAGE LOSSES FROM ALL CAUSES IN OCTOBER WERE THE LOWEST OF ANY MONTH OF THE WAR.

**What is this source?**

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

Roosevelt and Churchill had a close relationship that probably helped effective cooperation in the battle.

**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

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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. At 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...**

One of the key elements in turning the tide against the U-boats was the development of long-range aircraft that could spot the U-boats using specially developed radar. These could direct escort ships to attack the U-boats or they could attack the U-boats themselves.

Another key factor was the development of the Liberty Ship. This was a ship built in US shipyards that could be built in a few months. By 1943 the US shipyards were producing more ships than the U-boats could sink.

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### **How will you use this source?**

1. How does the message of this source compare to the map and chart showing Allied losses in the source box?
2. What is the biggest achievement mentioned in this source?
3. What made this turnaround possible?
4. Does this source help you to explain why the Battle of the Atlantic was so significant?