

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC



In May 2013 the nation will be commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic with events in London and Liverpool and the Fly Navy Heritage Trust is helping to support this important anniversary by raising money to ensure that Swordfish LS326 and W5856 can fly past in tribute to all those who gave their lives in the icy waters of the north Atlantic.

The Swordfish played a vital role in the Battle of the Atlantic defending convoys against attack by German U-boats and flying some of the most hazardous missions imaginable during the arduous six year campaign. The events in London will include a Service in St Paul's Cathedral on 8 May and a Battle of the Atlantic Dinner in HMS Illustrious at Greenwich on 9 May.

A four day national tribute is also planned in Liverpool 24-27 May including visits by Royal Navy and NATO warships and a Service in Liverpool Cathedral on 26 May. The two Swordfish plan to fly past Liverpool Cathedral and along the waterfront, from Princes Parade to King's Parade.

May 1942 was the pivotal point in World War II when air cover provided by the Swordfish operating from converted merchant ships and small escort carriers began to have a dramatic effect on stemming convoy losses. With its low speed and good manoeuvrability the Swordfish was the only aircraft available to operate from these tiny decks and

have enough fuel and weapon load to be viable. The Swordfish proved outstanding in the anti-submarine role and the introduction of radar and rockets gave the elderly aircraft further advantage. The first sinking of a U-boat by a Swordfish fitted with radar was on 21 Dec 41 and the first sinking of a U-boat destroyed by rockets was on 23 May 43 fired from a Swordfish of 819 Squadron embarked in HMS Archer, pictured above.

The extraordinary bravery of the Swordfish crews in the Battle of the Atlantic was little publicised and flying the Swordfish at next years' commemorative events will be an important and poignant reminder of the vital role played by naval air crews in the bitterly fought sea and air campaign. The Trust also plans to designate 2013 as the 'Year of the Swordfish' raising money to buy a vital Pegasus engine to ensure that their memory lives on in the last two flying examples of one of the greatest aircraft in the history of naval air warfare.

By keeping the Swordfish flying we can keep the memory of all those who served in the Battle of the Atlantic alive. Please donate today to our Battle of the Atlantic Appeal. Cheques should be made payable to 'Fly Navy Heritage Trust', marked Battle of the Atlantic Appeal or payment can be made by direct credit to the Fly Navy Heritage Trust Account Number 00100560 Sort Code 20-99-40 Barclays Bank plc. You can also make a donation on line and keep up to date on the Swordfish in next year's Battle of the Atlantic events by following us at twitter.com/flynavyheritage