



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **LONGEST MILITARY CAMPAIGN OF WW2 REMEMBERED**

Today the nation remembers the longest military campaign of the Second World War, the Battle of the Atlantic, which began in September 1939 and ended with the surrender of Germany on 8 May 1945.

The Battle of the Atlantic was fought over thousands of miles across the war's most dangerous shipping lanes.

Australians who served during the Battle of the Atlantic defended the vital Allied supply routes across the Atlantic Ocean, as Britain relied on shipping for almost everything it needed to survive — war materiel, food, fuel and reinforcements.

Germany sought to isolate Britain by severing the Atlantic shipping lanes, waging a campaign that cost the lives of tens of thousands of sailors on both sides.

This battle was critical to an Allied victory and had it been lost the war might have taken a very different course.

The Battle of the Atlantic involved submarines, ships and aircraft, code-breakers, intelligence operatives and thousands of civilian seamen and merchant mariners.

More than 3,000 British and Allied ships were sunk and some 30,000 Allied and merchant seamen died.

Some 5,000 Atlantic Stars were awarded to Australian service personnel and merchant mariners, providing a sense of how many men served in this campaign.

This year on 3 September, Australia will commemorate 80 years since it entered the Second World War.

Further information on the Second World War can be accessed on the [Anzac Portal](#), or on the [Australian War Memorial website](#).

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:** Department of Veterans' Affairs Media: 02 6289 6466

*Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling, provides support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Free and confidential help is available 24/7. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 1800 011 046 or +61 8 8241 4546) or visit [www.OpenArms.gov.au](http://www.OpenArms.gov.au)*