

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)

Other names/site number: BEDFORDSHIRE, HMS BEDFORDSHIRE

Name of related multiple property listing:

World War II Shipwrecks along the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: Offshore

City or town: Offshore-Beaufort State: Offshore-NC County: Offshore-Carteret

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

  X   national     statewide     local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  X   A     B     C   X   D

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of certifying official/Title:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of commenting official:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Title :**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government**

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)  
Name of Property

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County and State

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
<u>1</u>	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION – WATER RELATED

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)  
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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: N/A

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

See Continuation Sheets

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### Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheets

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)  
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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MARITIME HISTORY

MILITARY

ARCHAEOLOGY - HISTORIC

**Period of Significance**

1942

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

March 1942 (arrived in U.S. waters)

12 May 1942 (sank)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Smith's Dock Company, Middleborough, England

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

See Continuation Sheets

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See Continuation Sheets

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)  
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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See Continuation Sheets

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (Silver Spring, MD), East Carolina University's Program in Maritime Studies (Greenville, NC), and University of North Carolina's Coastal Studies Institute

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 61.77635

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |              |                   |                     |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Zone: 18N | Easting: 366,090  | Northing 3,798,178  |
| 2. Zone: 18N | Easting: 366,590  | Northing: 3,798,178 |
| 3. Zone: 18N | Easting: 366,090  | Northing: 3,797,678 |
| 4. Zone: 18N | Easting : 366,590 | Northing: 3,797,678 |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE lies 17.2 nautical miles offshore of Cape Lookout, North Carolina at a depth of 105 feet. The vessel's remains are in United States' Federal waters within the contiguous zone. North American Datum 1983 UTM Zone 18N coordinates for HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains) are 3,797,928 North x 366,340 East. This location marks the center of the property. The 61.77635 acre site (a square 500 meters per side with boundary coordinates: northwest corner 3,798,178 N x 366,090 E; northeast corner 3,798,178 N x 366,590 E; southwest corner 3,797,678 N x 366,090 E; southeast corner 3,797,678 N x 366,590 E) includes the main hull structure and debris field surrounding the vessel. See Map 1 and 2 for locational details.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The National Register boundaries of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE encompass the footprint of its articulated remains within a square (500 meters per side) to capture disarticulated remains and artifacts that are separated from the main structure. Surveys conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries revealed the extents of the centralized structure surrounded by scattered debris set apart from the main structure.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Deborah Marx and Joseph Hoyt, Maritime Archaeologists  
organization: NOAA/Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
street & number: 1305 East West Hwy Building: SSMC4  
city or town: Silver Spring state: MD zip code: 20910  
e-mail Deborah.Marx@noaa.gov  
telephone: 781-545-8026 ex 214  
date: 7/29/15

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. See page 46 Map 1 and Map 2.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)

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### Photo Log/Index of Photos

Note: Photos 001 through 005 are embedded within the nomination text and labeled within the text as Figure 001, Figure 002, etc.

Name of Property: HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)

City or Vicinity: Offshore - Beaufort

County: Offshore - Carteret

State: Offshore - NC

Photographer: *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary

Date Photographed: 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Archaeological site map of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's wreck site. Photo 001.

1 of 5.

Name of Property: HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)

City or Vicinity: Offshore - Beaufort

County: Offshore - Carteret

State: Offshore - NC

Photographer: Joe Hoyt, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary

Date Photographed: 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's boiler and frames. Photo 002.

2 of 5.

Name of Property: HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)

City or Vicinity: Offshore - Beaufort

County: Offshore - Carteret

State: Offshore - NC

Photographer: Joe Hoyt, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary

Date Photographed: 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's stern section includes a number of depth charges. Photo 003.

3 of 5.

Name of Property: HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)

City or Vicinity: Offshore - Beaufort

County: Offshore - Carteret

State: Offshore - NC

Photographer: Smith's Dock Company

Date Photographed: 1935

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Builder's drawings of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE and its sister ship *Cambridgeshire*. Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. Photo 004.

4 of 5.

Name of Property: HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)

City or Vicinity: Offshore - Beaufort

County: Offshore - Carteret

State: Offshore - NC

Photographer: unknown

Date Photographed: circa 1939-1942

Description of Photograph(s) and number: HMT BEDFORSHIRE outfitted as an armed trawler. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration. Photo 005.

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 12

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)
Name of Property
Offshore Carteret, NC
County and State
World War II Shipwrecks along the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico

### Section 7 – Description

#### SUMMARY

The shipwreck site of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE, also known historically as BEDFORDSHIRE and HMS BEDFORDSHIRE, is the remains of a 443-ton converted and militarized British fishing trawler, sunk during World War II off North Carolina with all hands by the German U-boat U-558 on 12 May 1942. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE had an overall length of 162.3 feet, a depth of 15.3 feet, and was 26.6 feet abeam. The vessel, designed and built originally as a fishing trawler in 1935, was adapted for military service by the British Royal Navy in 1939 and sent in March 1942 to support American naval operations off the Outer Banks, North Carolina. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was ultimately sunk, with the loss of all 37 crew members, by a torpedo fired from U-558 in May 1942. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was the only one of the 24 British naval trawlers sent to serve off the U.S. to be directly attacked and sunk by a German submarine near the American coast. The wreck site, which is broken into three separate sections, is in 105 feet of water 17 nautical miles southeast of Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's extant remains consist of its hull framing, collapsed hull plates, boiler, trawl winch gears and lower deck components, depth charge rack, depth charges, and sternpost. The vessel's sternpost, depth charge rack, and remaining depth charges clearly identify the stern and the vessel's forward deck gun mount defines the bow.

#### SETTING

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE sits in an upright orientation and is partially buried in a sandy bottom in 105 feet of water off the coast of Cape Lookout, North Carolina in an expanse of ocean often referred to as the Graveyard of the Atlantic due to the number of ships that have been lost in these waters. The strength of ocean currents on the site varies widely from nearly imperceptible to very swift. Depending on the current, visibility also varies, but commonly ranges around 40 feet. Summer water temperatures range between 70-80° F, and winter temperatures are typically in the low to mid-60°s F, making the site accessible to recreational SCUBA divers year round. The shipwreck's vertical relief is in stark contrast to the surrounding featureless sandy seafloor. Its structure serves as hard substrate for encrusting marine organisms and provides shelter for many species of marine life.

#### DESCRIPTION: ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's remains are in three separate sections on the seafloor (see Figure 001). The results of the torpedo's explosion that sank HMT BEDFORSHIRE are evident from the lack of substantially intact remains present on the seafloor. The largest two sections consist

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HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)

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and Gulf of Mexico

Section number 7 Page 13

of the broken off bow and the 145-foot long amidships/aft section. These two sections are 70 feet apart, separated by an open expanse of sand bottom. During a search for the USS *Monitor* in the 1970s, scientists located a third section of the wreck approximately 200 feet away from these other sections. This third section, believed to be the wheel house, was preliminarily imaged at that time but has not been fully documented. Popular dive guides written in the 1980s report that the wheel house was heavily damaged by the torpedo explosion and is largely buried in the sediment with only three feet of relief (Farb 1985:166).

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's bow section is 25 feet long and is mostly buried in sand 50 feet off the main hull structure's port side. Both the port and starboard fairleads are visible. The port side projects from the sand to a greater extent exposing the towing bits just inside the rail. Although the bow's starboard side is covered by sand to a greater degree, the forward deck gun mount is still visible. The deck gun was not found during recent archaeological investigations.

The shipwreck's main hull section is much larger and better defined than the disarticulated bow piece. This section is 145 feet in length and extends from the forward section where the bow is broken off to the sternpost. The remains of this steel-hulled vessel are characterized by I-beam frames and hull plates forming the hull's shape with disarticulated plating, I-beams, pipes, machinery, and bulkheads found inside the hull. The forward part of this section is almost entirely covered by sand with the exception of the port side, which retains vertical portions of hull and frames that protrude through the sand. Approximately 30 feet aft of the break in the hull, the vessel's boiler can be found along the centerline of the wreckage. The single boiler with its cylindrical uptake is the shipwreck's highest point of relief rising six feet above the sand (see Figure 002).

Aft of the boiler, much more of the vessel's remains are exposed, including the reinforced boiler room walls and sections of the original deck plating, vertical sections of the outer hull, deck support stanchions, and various other disarticulated constructional elements. Amongst the wreckage, parts of the main trawl winch's geared drive system are still visible providing evidence of the vessel's fishing trawler genesis. Aft of the trawl winch components at the very stern of the wreck are remnants of naval fittings and explosives that symbolize the vessel's use as a military vessel when lost. The military armaments consist of depth charge racks, depth charge supports and multiple unexploded depth charges (see Figure 003).

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HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)
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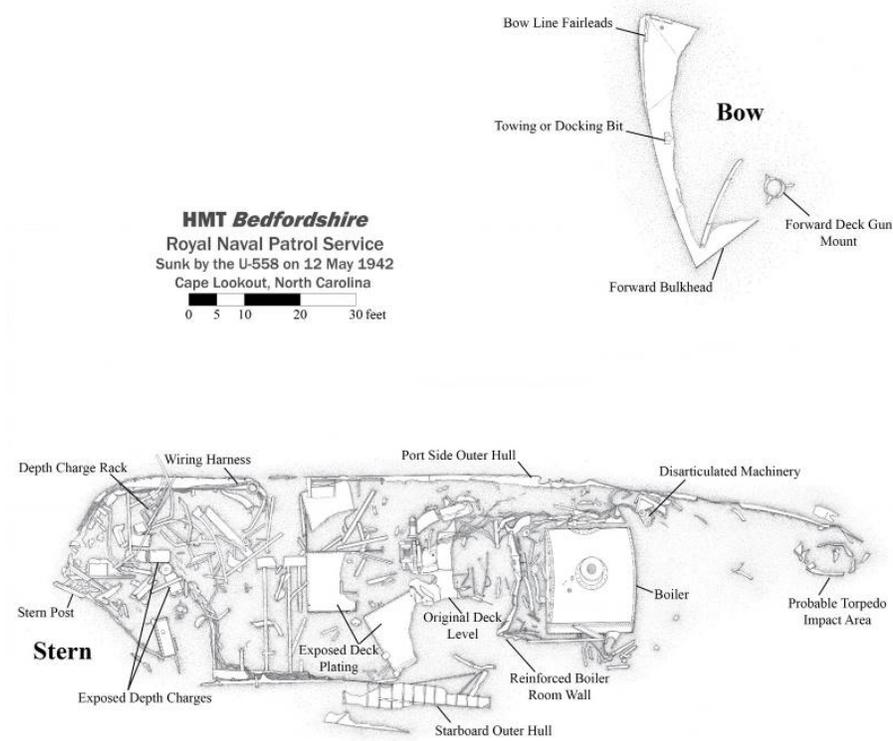


Figure 001. Archaeological site map of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's wreck site (courtesy of Monitor National Marine Sanctuary).



Figure 002. HMT BEDFORSHIRE's boiler and uptake protrudes from the sand (Joe Hoyt, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary).

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HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)
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Figure 003. Depth charge rails and depth charges can be found at the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's stern (Joe Hoyt, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary).

Historical and modern anthropogenic and natural processes have affected HMT BEDFORDSHIRE. The torpedo that sank the vessel undoubtedly caused considerable damage and likely split the bow from the rest of its hull. The wreck's low profile and lack of deck structures and deckhouses can also be attributed to historic demolition of the site by Allied patrol craft that encountered an unidentified sonar or magnetic contact and depth charged the wreck. Despite the fact that the wreck has always been the sovereign property of the United Kingdom, SCUBA divers have illegally collected items from the shipwreck ranging from small artifacts and personal items, to objects as large as the vessel's steering stand. Natural biological, physical and chemical processes have also caused site degradation. Corrosion has fragmented and reduced the vessel's steel structure, organisms have devoured organic remains and wave action and currents have removed or destroyed lighter objects and artifacts.

#### SITE INVESTIGATIONS

In the early 1980s, North Carolina dive charter owner Captain George Purifoy found the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE while dragging his anchor back from another dive site. He and his dive partner, Mike Sheen, initially thought he had caught on a rock but upon diving in for a closer

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inspection, they discovered that the anchor had hooked into the armed trawler. As the site was not intact, its identity was not immediately apparent. Ultimately, the men raised a steering stand with a British manufacturer's name which eventually helped the team identify the site as the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (Gentile 1992:35).

Although the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's location has been known to the recreational diving and fishing communities for several decades, a comprehensive archaeological examination of the site was not conducted until 2009. In August 2009, per requests of the United Kingdom, which had heard reports that human remains had been discovered on the site, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary, in partnership with multiple other federal and state agencies as well as academic institutions, launched an expedition to document the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE.

The 2009 investigation generated an accurate archaeological site plan of the wreck, collected photographs and video footage and confirmed the presence of human remains on the shipwreck. NOAA notified the United Kingdom of the presence of human remains and it was decided to leave them in situ. The site plan, photographs and video footage collected during this expedition enable archaeologists to monitor the site for continued degradation and illegal artifact recovery. Divers also deployed a sector-scanning sonar, which enabled the project archaeologists to obtain wide scale sonar imagery of the site. This imagery did not reveal the wheel house section reported by others suggesting that it may be entirely buried.

NOAA's 2009 summer investigation was part of a larger multi-year project to research and document a number of historically significant shipwrecks lost in the Battle of the Atlantic off North Carolina during World War II. The project's overall goal was to raise the public's awareness of the heritage resources representative of the largely forgotten chapter of World War II that was fought closest to the American home front. This effort was also undertaken to determine baseline preservation values, initiate and support ongoing historical and archaeological research in North Carolina and to evaluate the significance of this collection in consideration of expanding the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary off North Carolina. Work has included diver surveys and mapping to generate site-plans and photomosaics, as well as remote sensing surveys using multibeam and ROV/AUV technology. Project collaborators included the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, National Park Service, East Carolina University, the University of North Carolina Coastal Studies Institute and the state of North Carolina (Richards and Hoyt 2014).

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### Section 8 – Statement of Significance

#### SUMMARY

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was built in 1935 as a British fishing trawler before it was requisitioned by the Admiralty for military service at the start of World War II in 1939. It was quickly converted to an armed trawler and put to work by the Royal Navy escorting and protecting merchant shipping convoys from submarine and aircraft attack that sought to halt the critical flow of Allied war supplies. The Royal Navy Patrol Serviced utilized over 1,100 British trawlers during the war, from the Arctic to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic to Africa and the Far East. Once the United States entered the war and Germany extended its *handelskrieg* (“trade war”) to American shores by dispatching U-boats across the Atlantic Ocean, Allied merchant shipping losses mounted. Known as the Battle of Atlantic, the United States military was caught unprepared and unable to deal with the U-boat attacks. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard desperately needed anti-submarine warfare vessels, but most American vessels in this class had already been dispatched to the European theater. In February 1942, the Royal Navy sent HMT BEDFORDSHIRE and 23 other militarized British trawlers to the United States in a reversal of the flow of military aid made possible through the Lend-Lease Act. The trawlers filled a needed gap along the East Coast, patrolling, escorting and engaging the enemy. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was ultimately sunk, with the loss of all 37 crewmembers, by a torpedo fired from U-558 on 12 May 1942. It was the only one of the 24 British trawlers to be directly attacked and sunk by a German submarine off the American coast. The archaeological remains of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE are significant at the national level under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and D with the period of significance being the year 1942.

For a more comprehensive synopsis of the Battle of the Atlantic’s significance reference the World War II Shipwrecks along the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico Multiple Property Submission (MPS) (NPS reference number 64501184). HMT BEDFORDSHIRE is included as one of the Allied military losses associated with the Battle of the Atlantic in the document.

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE qualifies for listing under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and is significant in the area of Maritime History based upon the vessel’s association with the Battle of the Atlantic off the United States’ East Coast during 1942. The HMT BEDFORDSHIRE is directly connected to the maritime campaign Germany undertook to sink Allied merchant shipping throughout the Atlantic theater during World War II. U.S. military operations combating Germany’s U-boats off America’s coast was a protracted and wide ranging battle spanning the length of the war and thousands of miles of coastline. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE’s shipwreck off North Carolina is physical evidence of the heroism and sacrifice of its crew and a reminder of the efforts made by mariners to protect maritime

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commerce and the American home front. The British armed trawler's loss represents a connection between Allied forces and the closest theater of war to the continental United States during World War II.

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE qualifies for listing under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and is significant in the area of Military based upon the vessel's association with Allied military operations at sea off the Outer Banks to combat the German U-boat threat during 1942. The shipwreck symbolizes the United States' unpreparedness and lack of purpose-built anti-submarine warfare and escort vessels that were needed to counter U-boat depredations along the U. S. East Coast at the beginning of World War II. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE is representative of a dramatic time in American history when the country was struggling to fight wars on multiple fronts and had already allocated its purpose-built naval vessels to the war in the Pacific and European theaters. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE also qualifies under Criteria A as an example of a military vessel lost to Axis (U-boat) military actions offshore the United States in World War II as it was sunk, with the loss of all hands, by a single torpedo fired from the German U-boat U-558 on 12 May 1942.

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE qualifies for listing under the National Register of Historic Places Criteria D and is significant in the areas of Archaeology – Historic based upon the archaeological site's likelihood to yield information important to history. Archaeological investigations of the shipwreck's hull, machinery, armament and cultural artifacts may provide information that will confirm or contradict historical records. Archaeological data will provide details about the trawler's initial construction, modification for naval use in European waters, adaptation for military use off North Carolina and its eventual sinking at the hands of U-558 in 1942. The vessel, designed and built originally as a fishing trawler, was adapted for military service by the British Royal Navy and eventually sent to support the American naval operations off the Outer Banks. It represents the 24 British armed trawlers that were sent to the United States to fight the war. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was not only converted for naval service in the United Kingdom, but once it arrived in the United States it underwent additional modifications to better operate under conditions it was not accustomed to. No details have been found in the historical record describing the specific way in which the individual trawlers were adapted to military use in Europe or the United States. Vessels of opportunity like the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE allowed the Allied nations to share resources, both material and personnel, and join forces in time of war. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's remains are an important physical reminder of World War II off North Carolina and future study of the site will continue to record the site overall characteristics, its extents, anthropogenic impacts and material culture. This data will yield information not only about the vessel itself but also about its crew and answer questions about shipboard life and military operations off the United States' coast. None of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's 37 man crew survived its wrecking off North Carolina in 1942. As a result, there are no accounts of the

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HMT BEDFORDSHIRE (shipwreck and remains)
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armed trawler's sinking other than from U-558's log that states it made a successful hit. The shipwreck's documentation is the only way to uncover details about the U-boat attack and subsequent sinking. With a total loss of life, the vessel exemplifies the sacrifices made by Americans and their allies during World War II while attempting to keep sea-lanes open and war supplies flowing to Europe.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Smith's Dock Company of South Bank-on-Tees at Middlesborough, England built hull number 998 for the Bedfordshire Fishing Company. Launched on 17 July 1935, BEDFORDSHIRE would not receive its HMT for "Her Majesty's Trawler" until after its commissioning into the Royal Navy in 1939. The 443 gross-ton, single screw, steel-hulled steam commercial fishing trawler was built upon the same plans as hull 987, which was BEDFORDSHIRE's sister ship the *Cambridgeshire* (see Figure 004). BEDFORDSHIRE had an overall length of 162.3 feet, a depth of hold of 15.3 feet, and was 26.6 feet abeam. It had two masts, one deck, and a cruiser stern. Its official number listed in the 1935-36 Lloyds Register of Ships was 164392 with signal letters GYMB. The trawler was powered by a single triple expansion reciprocating steam engine, also built by Smith's Dock Company, with a single stack just aft of amidships. The engine generated 961 horsepower and was capable of propelling the vessel at approximately 12 knots. BEDFORDSHIRE was built specifically as a fishing trawler and had most of its cargo space dedicated to fish storage (Smith's Dock Co., Ltd., 1935).

BEDFORDSHIRE's layout was typical of a steel-hulled British steam trawler of the middle 1930s. The Smith's Dock Co., Ltd. builder's plans from 1935 detail the trawler's features and topside and interior arrangements. The main deck was occupied by all the essential deck gear and machinery including a large double drum trawl winch just forward of the raised wheelhouse, two gallows frames used for towing the trawl net and a smaller hand windlass and steam anchor windlass on the forecastle. Five square deck hatches were positioned forward of the trawl winch for access to the fish holds. Additionally, there were 10 rounds hatches on either side of the deck house for filling the side bunkers with coal. Lastly, there was a small stern house containing a head or water closet as well as the liver boiler house used for rendering down livers for fish oil. A single lifeboat hung from stern davits for use in emergencies. Just forward of the life raft was the galley with a staircase to below decks where the crew ate. The galley contained the range, coal box and storeroom.

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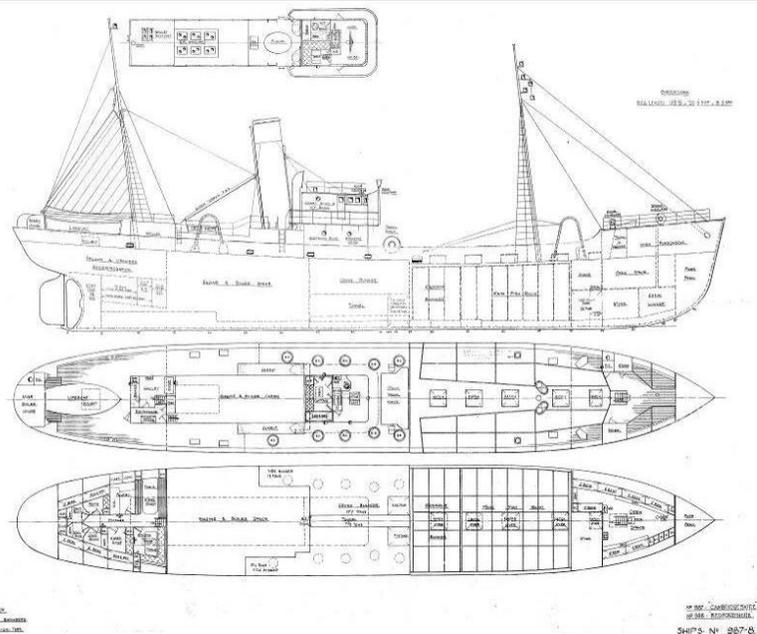


Figure 004. Builder's drawings of BEDFORDSHIRE and its sister ship *Cambridgeshire* (courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London).

The most prominent feature on the main deck was the two story wheel house that housed the captain's room, chart room and steering gear. This structure was just aft of the trawl winch, had a walkway running  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way around, and provided a clear view of the entire fishing operation for the captain. BEDFORDSHIRE was supplied with the most modern instruments for its crew including a pole compass, roof compass and wireless directing finder. These devices allowed the captain to better navigate to and from the fishing grounds and to better direct his trawling efforts.

The area below decks was taken up mostly by the engine and boiler spaces, crew quarters and the fish holds. BEDFORDSHIRE's pantry, mess room, saloon and officer accommodations include those for the chief engineer took up the vessel's stern compartments. A skylight above the area's passageway provided light and air circulation. The engine and boiler space as well as side, cross and reserve coal bunkers as well as two fresh water storage tanks occupied the amidships space. The fish hold dominated a third of the vessel's length forward of the engineering spaces. The forward most compartments contained storage space, the chain locker, head, crew quarters including their own stove, and the forepeak. A companionway in the middle of the area allowed access in and out through the open forecastle (Smith's Dock Co. Ltd. 1935).

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Smith's Dock Company's began operating in the marine field as early as 1768, but its owners did not formally incorporate the business until 1891. By 1908, it operated a large shipbuilding yard at South Bank, Middleborough, Cleveland and the firm soon became well known as excellent builders of steam fishing trawlers. In addition to BEDFORDSHIRE's launch in 1935, Smith Dock Company's also built thirteen other vessels: one whaler, one cargo vessel, and 11 trawlers that same year. Between 1910 and 1987, the South Bank complex built over 900 vessels with their most famous design being the Flower class corvette, a World War II anti-submarine convoy escort (Ritchie 1992:143-144; Shipping and Shipbuilding Research Trust). HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's launch from Smith's Dock was covered in the newspapers that reported, "The christening ceremony was performed by Master John Cook, son of Mr. H. Markham Cook, managing director of the owning company" (*Daily Mail* 18 July 1935).

### HMT BEDFORDSHIRE'S CAREER (1935-1942)

BEDFORDSHIRE was completed by August 1935 and turned over to its owner the Bedfordshire Fishing Company, managed by H. Markham Cook Ltd. of Fish Dock Road in Grimsby, England. Its first captain, Albert Elletson, would start the trawler's short fishing career steaming from Grimsby (*Daily Mail* 18 July 1935). Grimsby, located on the South Bank of the Humber Estuary where it connects to the North Sea, was by the 1950s the largest fishing port in the world due to its close proximity to the North Sea fishing grounds. BEDFORDSHIRE's port registry number in Grimsby was GY 196 and it was not the only vessel under H. Markham Cook Ltd.'s management. The company, one of the youngest trawler management firms in Grimsby during the mid-1930s, managed at least 27 deep water trawlers (*Hull Daily Mail* 16 April 1934; *Hull Daily Mail* 21 October 1937). "H. Markham of Grimsby possessed a number of vessels bearing 'Shire' names, *Ayershire*, *Fifeshire*, etc., but just to confuse matters each vessel was allotted its own company. The *Ayershire* was registered, for example, as being owned by the Ayreshire Company and the *Fifeshire* by the Fifeshire Company and so on" (Toghill 2004:xii).

Little information was found in historical records to characterize BEDFORDSHIRE's four-year fishing career. Presumably, the vessel fished with its otter trawl for groundfish in the North Sea and offloaded its catch in Grimsby for sale across Europe. Between 1900 and the late 1950s steam trawlers, including BEDFORDSHIRE, ". . . were by far the most important component of the British fishing fleet, and in most of those years landed at least 80% of Britain's entire North Sea demersal catch" (Engelhard 2009:5). This period is known as the golden age of steam trawling.

BEDFORDSHIRE was a simple workhorse and like most fishing vessels, minimal information about its career was recorded unless it is involved in an accident or other noteworthy event. The only mention of the trawler that research efforts have uncovered appears in the newspaper *Daily*

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*Mail* on 10 April 1939. The article's headline reads "Grimsby Trawler Ashore in Fog." BEDFORDSHIRE was outward bound for the Icelandic fishing grounds when it went ashore on the rocks at Red Head on the north side of Freswick, Scotland. It was refloated immediately and continued on its voyage undamaged.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Grimsby's fleet contained at least 300 steam trawlers. Once war broke out, the British government realized it was lacking vessels to defend its shores and its merchant shipping. Over the course of the war the government purchased 250 Grimsby trawlers to supplement the purpose-built naval fleet. The British Admiralty acquired BEDFORDSHIRE in August 1939, just prior to Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1 and the formal declaration of war by England on September 3. It joined the Royal Navy and was converted from a merchant fishing trawler into an armed military asset. The Admiralty purchased 21 other trawlers from Grimsby and 35 from Hull at the same time as BEDFORDSHIRE (*The Daily Mail* 9 August 1939). BEDFORDSHIRE's rapid conversion to a naval vessel resulted in it receiving not the most modern and effective armament, but whatever armament was available. In December the trawler's conversion was complete and it joined the 17<sup>th</sup> A/S [anti-submarine] Group based at Swansea for patrols in the British Channel with a compliment of 34 in crew (Toghill 2004:39).

To combat the most advanced German naval weapons of World War II, BEDFORDSHIRE received a raised platform on the forecastle that supported a World War I era four-inch quick-fire deck gun. Enemy aircraft were to be engaged with a World War I era .303 caliber Lewis machine gun. Since BEDFORDSHIRE was intended for anti-submarine warfare, its primary weapon was depth charges jettisoned overboard by throwers and rails. BEDFORDSHIRE's ability to launch a sustained attack was limited by its ability to reload; replacing expended depth charges was a "most laborious chore requiring much manhandling and hauling of ropes and pulleys from below." With spaced out depth charges the trawler could put out ten of them in a relatively short window for an all-out attack. By December 1940, twin .50 caliber machine guns were also added as well as a steam-powered Holman Projector that launched projectiles at enemy aircraft (Naisawald 1997:20-22).

BEDFORDSHIRE's conversion was similar to what was done to all of the trawlers (See Figure 005). In general, all requisitioned trawlers received a steel platform for a large gun at its bow with a smaller anti-aircraft gun sometimes located at the stern. Depth charge racks were positioned besides the bridge and at the stern. Below decks, the fish hold was changed to crew quarters and anti-submarine gear storage. Overall the hull, deckheads and frames were strengthened to bear the weight of the guns and mine sweeping gear and all the fishing gear, including the some of the trawl winch parts, were taken off to make room for stores. In many cases, as with the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE, the parts of the winch occupying the main deck, such

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as the double drums, were removed but the gears and machinery that ran the winch located below decks were not removed due to the complexity of getting to those components. “. . . rarely were any two trawlers alike in the armament as a hotchpotch of weapons were ‘won’ by an ever-eager ship’s company to add to their firepower; particularly in respect to AA [anti-aircraft] weapons” (*The Canberra Times* 25 March 1941; Toghil 2003: 14-15).

After being fitted for military service, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE began escort and anti-submarine patrols around the southwest coast of England and the Bristol Channel. It also guarded the Bristol Channel lightship and cable ships. Most of the trawler’s time was spent out of Devenport with two other armed trawlers and a destroyer. The vessels escorted convoys to and from the Isle of Wright to Swansea, Barry Island and Milford Haven (Naisawald 1997:22). During this time, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE’s crew gained patrol experience by defending against at least five attacks by German aircraft and conducting several depth charge attacks on suspected U-boats. On one occasion in January 1940 while protecting a cable ship off Lundy Island, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE’s ASDIC, and early submerged object detection system that used sonar, registered a contact underwater and it proceeded to launch several rounds of depth charges. Two British destroyers joined the search but the U-boat escaped (Naisawald 1997:22-23).

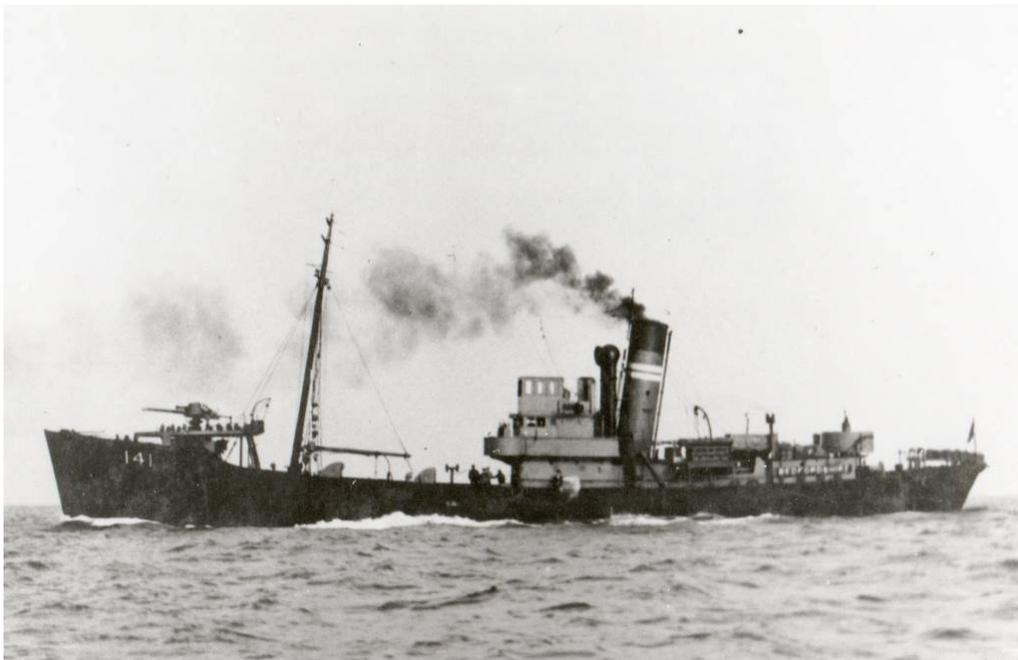


Figure 005. HMT BEDFORSHIRE outfitted as an armed trawler (courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration).

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The requisitioning of vessels during World War II was not the first time Great Britain had taken nonmilitary vessels for military use. Six years before the start of World War I, the Royal Navy purchased two trawlers for use during tests related to minesweeping effectiveness. After the trawlers showed how suitable they were for the job, the government purchased several more for additional trials. In 1910, formal plans were developed to enlist fishermen to man the requisitioned trawlers if needed for war time. This service would be known as the Royal Navy Patrol Service. When World War I broke out in 1914 the service was put into order and by 1918 over 1,800 trawlers and thousands of fishermen spanned the world's waters on behalf of the Royal Navy (Toghill 2004:vii).

Trawlers were well designed for adaptation to military use and the Admiralty's requisition program saw these vessels specifically suited to minesweeping, antisubmarine, and convoy escort duties. Their strongly built hulls were designed to work in all types of weather conditions and they had large open decks for men to work on. For a minesweeper the upper part of the trawl winch that sat forward of the pilothouse on the main deck was replaced by a mine sweep and this combined with depth charge racks at the stern and a gun on the bow created a useful anti-submarine asset. The interwar period saw a dramatic increase in the numbers of fishing trawlers in the United Kingdom. The major fishing ports of Grimsby, Hull, Aberdeen, Fleetwood and Lowestoft contained vessels of all sizes, either owned in fleets by large companies or individually by a family or individual. Requisitioning a vessel meant that during times of war or emergencies a government of a ship's registry could seize a vessel for its own use. It is unclear how vessel owners were then compensated for the requisition and subsequent earnings loss. The British government did pay trawler owners, but the unemployment to the fishermen was not taken into consideration and they were left mostly out of work.

By January 1940, newspapers reported that 7,000 men were unemployed in Grimsby due to the Admiralty's taking over of the port's trawlers (*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury* 15 January 1940). After conversion, many fishermen did eventually find work with the government or became crew of the requisitioned trawlers but the port's fishermen took a big financial hit during the war. Requisitioned trawlers were key components to the anti-submarine war at the start of World War II and for many more years after until shipyards could ramp up their programs. In the meantime the "civilian" trawlers filled the gap. There was a delicate balance between the number of trawlers the Admiralty could take while still leaving enough vessels to catch fish at home. It was not until 1943 that the requisitioned trawlers began to be released from military service. Between 1939 and 1945, 1,100 trawlers served the Admiralty including BEDFORDSHIRE.

When BEDFORDSHIRE became part of the Royal Navy it obtained the prefix HMT before its name to indicate it as Her Majesty's Trawler. This was the standard term used for all purpose-

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built and requisitioned trawlers. An additional honor in recognition of its service against enemy submarines was bestowed upon the vessel in late 1941 when it received a heraldic emblem adapted from Bedfordshire's coast of arms. "The emblem, which conforms with naval heraldry, will be constant reminder to the crew of their benevolent foster parents, the subscribers to the H.M. Trawler 'Bedfordshire' Fund." The emblem served as a ship's badge or logo and was mounted on its superstructure. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's emblem was, "crowned by a number of figures illustrating the sails and other parts of men-of-war of the Middle Ages as well as the colors of Bedfordshire's [sic] coast of arms." The design, created by Mr. H.S. Manning, a heraldic expert, featured red and gold as its prominent colors (*Biggleswade Chronicle and Bedfordshire Gazette* 5 September 1941). HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's commander, Lieutenant Russell Bransby Davis, Royal Navy Reserve, wrote to the Lieutenancy and thanked the Fund for the emblem and ensured it would have a place of honor on the trawler. The letter also stated the Fund provided the vessel with a wireless set and "wollen comforts" supplied by the St. Andrew's knitting party (*Biggleswade Chronicle and Bedfordshire Gazette* 12 December 1941).

During World War II armed trawlers were called the, "rat catching terriers of the Navy" in comparison to the torpedo boats, light cruisers, and destroyers described as "greyhounds of the fleet." Overshadowed, during and after the war, by the accomplishments of the larger vessels, it was the smaller trawlers and support vessels that supported the safe transport of raw materials, kept the public supplied, and protected the coasts from submarines over a greater area. "Every day, in all kinds of weather, you will find them sweeping the mines, hunting the U-boat, and guarding the convoys which bring home Britain's bacon" (*The Canberra Times* 25 March 1941).

By "Necessity" out of [the] Fishing Fleet" is the humble pedigree of the anti-submarine trawler, but to Britain today they are almost worth their weight in gold. Along the sea lanes of the Empire plod these terriers of the sea, "sniffing" with their amazing super-hydrophones for the lurking U-boat and when they find him, smashing at him relentlessly with their depth charges (*The Canberra Times* 25 March 1941).

The trawlers' initial tactics were to patrol in pairs against German submarines. "Taking on the nickname of 'Harry Tate's Navy' after a popular British comedian, the RNPS [Royal Navy Patrol Service] grew from a force of 6,000 men and some 600 ships to 66,000 and 6,000 vessels" (Naisawald 1997:20). Based in Lowestoft, the RNPS would lose 2,385 men by the end of World War II (Naisawald 1997:20).

In 1942, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE moved to convoy duties in the Bristol/English Channels escorting and protecting merchant shipping. The last known attack on the trawler in European

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waters happened on 5 January 1942 when it was targeted while escorting a convoy. A German airplane dropped one or two bombs off its stern but missed. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's crew fired back with all its guns (Naisawald 1997:25-26).

In February of that year HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's crew, along with the crews of 23 other converted fishing trawlers, were notified that they would be transferred across the Atlantic for anti-submarine service in American waters where U-boats were successfully sinking merchant ships. This little ship from England was a hardened veteran by now and was destined to become an important fixture in the Battle of the Atlantic off North Carolina. The trawler's entire crew would remain onboard for its movement across the Atlantic. During its trip overseas it escorted the damaged armed merchant cruiser *Queen of Bermuda* from Halifax to New York for repairs. From then on out, under the command of Lieutenant Russell Bransby Davis, Royal Navy Reserve, it served as a convoy escort off the East Coast and Canada (Toghill 2004:39). More specifically HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was assigned to the Fifth Naval District, sectors two and three. This placed the trawler on duty off North Carolina's Outer Banks.

The U-boat war against Allied shipping was designed to cut off the vital flow of resources to the Allied nations, particularly Great Britain. Germany believed that England, as an island nation, would be crippled without a continuous flow of maritime commerce. While the United States claimed neutrality in the early war years, President Franklin Roosevelt began the Lend-Lease program, which allowed the U.S. to provide materials including naval vessels to the Allied powers.

For a more comprehensive synopsis of the Battle of the Atlantic's significance reference the World War II Shipwrecks along the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico Multiple Property Submission (MPS) (NPS reference number 64501184). HMT BEDFORDSHIRE is included as one of the Allied military losses associated with the Battle of the Atlantic in the document.

Ironically, with so many vessels, including 50 U.S. Navy destroyers, loaned to Great Britain during this period there was a shortage of much needed military vessels along the American coast when the United States entered into the war. As a result, the United States could not muster enough defensive power to protect shipping along the American coast when the U-boats first began an offensive against the American shipping lanes in the beginning of 1942. This lack of military ships left any merchant vessel sailing off the American coast vulnerable and left the United States in need of aid. In order to help remedy this situation, Great Britain agreed to loan 24 armed trawlers (see Table 1) accompanied by 10 corvettes and two whalers to the U.S. for escorting and anti-submarine warfare in February 1942 (Blair 1996:543, Naisawald 1997:27). All of the British armed trawlers, including HMT BEDFORDSHIRE, were less than 200 feet in length and were originally home ported mostly out of Hull and Grimsby. An armed trawler's

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	Builder	Launch	Displacement (GT)	Pre-war owner (port)	Requisitioned	Fate
<i>Arctic Explorer</i>	Cochrane	1937	501	Boyds (Hull)	1939-1945	Sold 1945
<i>Bedfordshire</i>	Smith's Dock	1935	433	Bedfordshire SFC (Grimsby)	1939-1942	Sunk by U-boat off NC 12 May 1942
<i>Cape Warwick</i>	Cochrane	1937	516	Earle SF (Grimsby); Hudson Bros. (Hull)	1939-1946	Sold 1946
<i>Coventry City</i>	Smith's Dock	1937	546	Consolidated Fisheries (Grimsby)	1939-1946	Returned to owners 1946
<i>Hertfordshire</i>	Smith's Dock	1936	458	Rutlandshire SF (Grimsby)	1939-1945	Returned to owners 1945
<i>Kingston Ceylonite</i>	CWG	1935	448	Kingston STC (Hull)	1939-1942	Sunk by German mine off VA 15 June 1942
<i>Le Tiger</i>	Selby	1937	516	Earle SF (Grimsby)	1939-1945	Sold 1945
<i>Lady Elysa</i>	CWG	1937	518	Earle SF (Grimsby)	1939-1945	Sold to owners 1945
<i>Lady Rosemary</i>	CWG	1937	472	Jutland Amalgamated Trs (Hull)	1940-1945	Returned to owners 1946
<i>Northern Chief</i>	(Germany)	1936	655	Mac Line (Fleetwood)	1939-1945	Returned to owners 1945
<i>Northern Dawn</i>	(Germany)	1936	655	Mac Line (Fleetwood)	1939-1946	Returned to owners 1946
<i>Northern Duke</i>	(Germany)	1936	655	Mac Line (Fleetwood)	1939-1946	Returned to owners 1946
<i>Northern Foam</i>	(Germany)	1936	655	Mac Line (Fleetwood)	1939-1946	Returned to owners 1946
<i>Northern Isles</i>	(Germany)	1936	655	Mac Line (Fleetwood)	1939-1945	Stranded off South Africa 1945
<i>Northern Princess</i>	(Germany)	1936	655	Mac Line (Fleetwood)	1939-1942	Sank by U-boat off Newfoundland 8 March 1942
<i>Northern Reward</i>	(Germany)	1936	655	Mac Line (Fleetwood)	1939-1946	Returned to owners 1946
<i>Norwich City</i>	Smith's Dock	1937	541	Consolidated Fisheries (Grimsby)	1939-1946	Returned to owners 1946
<i>Pentland Firth</i>	CWG	1934	458	Firth ST (Hull)	1939-1942	Sank by collision off NY 19 September 1942
<i>St. Cathan</i>	CWG	1936	565	T. Hamling (Hull)	1939-1942	Sank by collision off SC 11 April 1942
<i>St. Loman</i>	CWG	1936	565	T. Hamling (Hull)	1939-1946	Returned to owners 1946
<i>St. Zenon</i>	CWG	1940	608	T. Hamling (Hull)	1940-1946	Sold 1946
<i>Senateur Duhamel</i>	(Scotland)	1927	913		1941-1942	Sank by collision off NC 6 May 1942
<i>Stella Polaris</i>	Cochrane	1936	498	Charleson & Smith Trs. (Hull)	1942-1945	Returned to owners 1942
<i>Wellard</i>	CWG	1937	514	Earle SF (Grimsby)	1942-1946	Sold 1946

Table 1: The 24 armed British trawlers lent to the United States for anti-submarine patrols during World War II (Toghill 2003; Toghill 2004).

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speed was not its primary asset rather they were chosen because they were tough and stood their ground to combat the U-boats by using deck mounted guns and depth charges (*Derby Evening Transcript* 21 August 1942).

The U.S. Navy also requisitioned American vessels, as England had done, to support coastal defensive, anti-submarine and minesweeping work. Known as the mosquito fleet, the vessels included private craft and commercial fishing vessels. Most were only suited to nearshore operations unlike the larger steel hulled British trawlers. However, the U.S. Navy sought out American-built beam trawlers, similar to the British counterparts, for conversion to military service, purchasing 23 fishing vessels on the East Coast for three and a half million dollars (Gloucester Master Mariners Association Year Book 1941).

After Germany's declaration of war on the United States, four days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U-boat offensive quickly began focusing on the United States' East Coast. U-boats arrived in U.S. waters in January 1942 and began attacking merchant freighters and tankers with relative impunity. These heavy merchant losses in the United States' Eastern Sea Frontier were a cause for concern. Military leaders were shocked to hear of merchant vessels being sunk within eyesight of shore. Great Britain, who was relying on the supplies carried by those merchant vessels to continue its war efforts and supply its populace with food and essential commodities, was greatly concerned also. The Royal Navy's experience combating the U-boat threat was vastly greater than that of the U.S. Navy and while only 24 converted antisubmarine trawlers could be spared from the European theater, the small vessels were a welcome force when they set sail on 15 February 1942 for U.S. waters. These little craft bought the United States time to build up its fleet and determine the best strategy to combat the U-boats.

The trip across the Atlantic was dangerous and rough. During the transit, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE lost its small boat and its ash chute in heavy seas. On 8 March 1942, while passing Newfoundland, the trawler HMT *Northern Princess* was sunk by U-587 with the loss of all its crew and no wreckage or bodies were recovered (Lund and Ludlam 1975:155). Captain Lieutenant Russell B. Davis commanded HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's 40 officers and seamen who consisted of Royal Navy Reserve, Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, and Royal Navy men. Just before arriving in Halifax, Nova Scotia the trawler picked up survivors from the torpedoed Norwegian ship *Tyr* and landed them in Halifax on 22 March. Once in port the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE and four more British trawlers proceeded south while at the same time serving as an escort to the damaged former luxury liner, now turned armed merchant cruiser, HMS *Queen of Bermuda* that was in tow to New York for repairs (Naisawald 1997:14, 27-30).

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### HMT BEDFORDSHIRE ARRIVES IN THE U.S. (1942)

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE and the other 23 vessels of the Royal Naval Patrol Service arrived at the U.S. Navy Yard in Brooklyn in March 1942. The vessels were in need of an overhaul and were painted and additional ventilation installed. This was important for ships from Great Britain, which were built for service in the cooler North Sea climates, but were destined to operate off the Carolinas where heat was a legitimate concern. At the same time, the engines were modified to operate using a slightly lower quality coal, which was cheaper and more readily available. During the trawlers conversions the war raged on offshore. Finally, by late March, all of the British trawlers had been approved for service by the U.S. Navy and were deployed along the East Coast. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was sent to operate off the Outer Banks of North Carolina while other trawlers were based near New York, Boston, and Charleston (Naisawald 1997:32-33).

When HMT BEDFORDSHIRE arrived on station in April 1942, convoys under armed escorts were in place to protect merchant shipping and better offensive and defensive strategies were enacted. Strategies included laying mines, coordinated patrols, antisubmarine netting off ports and coastal blackouts. While operating off North Carolina, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE participated in critical convoy escort duty. Following the sinking of the first German U-boat by the U.S. Navy on 13 April 1942, the U-85, the trawler patrolled the site and aided in attempts to recover intelligence material from the sunken U-boat (Blair 1996:543). The armed trawler returned to patrolling between Cape Lookout and Cape Henry during the remaining days in April and it also assisted HMS *Kingston Ceylonite* in protecting the torpedoed, but still floating tanker *Harry F. Sinclair Jr.* seven miles off Cape Lookout (Naisawald 1997:35).

The British trawlers helped in deterring U-boats from sinking shipping off the United States. The *Fresno Bee* reported that in just a few months, "Most but not all of the Axis submarines have been driven from the waters along the Atlantic Coast since Great Britain sent over a fleet of smoke begrimed trawlers to conduct convoys in those areas." The newspaper reporter went onboard one of the trawlers and described his impression of the craft as,

. . . rough and tough and armed to the teeth against submarines and planes and surface craft as well - for convoying in the English Channel was a three way job. . . . She was a rooting, tooting tug boat Annie with brass knuckles, and she knew her business"  
(*Fresno Bee* 14 September 1942).

While on patrol, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE often traveled alongside another Royal Naval Patrol Service trawlers. On 10 May, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE and HMS *St. Zeno* departed Morehead

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City to meet up with and then escort a convoy from Cape Lookout to Cape Hatteras. The vessels joined the convoy in the afternoon and then proceeded north. Typically, convoy escorts would sail with one escort ahead of the convoy and the other positioned seaward at the flank. At some point during the night, the escorts changed positions before successfully delivering the convoy to Cape Hatteras, but exactly what HMT BEDFORDSHIRE did afterwards is unknown (Naisawald 1997:48). It has been hypothesized that after delivering the convoy around midnight, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE turned around and headed southwest towards Cape Lookout. The U.S. Navy War Diary indicated that the trawler's orders for the night of 11 May were to patrol between No. 4 buoy at approximately 34° 53' N. 75° 31' W. and No. 14 buoy 34° 18' N. 76° 24' W (U.S. Navy 1942).

On the afternoon of 11 May, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's radioman sent out one final routine message while on return patrol from Hatteras (Hickam 1989:204). The U.S. Navy recorded that the message occurred at 3:12pm and it indicated the trawler was still at sea on a patrol (Naisawald 1997:58). Unbeknownst to the trawler's crew, its patrol track placed them in the direct path of a hunting U-boat.

### HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's DEMISE (12 May 1942)

U-558 was captained by Kapitänleutnant Günther Krech. Launched on 23 December 1940, U-558 was a type VIIC U-boat that had a very successful career with ten patrols sinking 19 merchant and military ships totaling almost 100,000 tons. En route to the Gulf of Mexico on its seventh patrol, U-558 traversed the waters off Cape Lookout where HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was assigned to patrol. On 11 May, Kapitänleutnant Krech and the 43 crewmen aboard U-558 were practicing rapid dives from the surface, an evasive maneuver. As U-558 surfaced from one of these dives it spotted two patrol boats, one being HMT BEDFORDSHIRE, in the distance and dove again to hide. However, one of the patrol craft spotted the submarine and after racing to intercept, spent the next four to six hours searching the area with ASDIC sonar without result. Hearing the search activity diminish, U-558 came up to periscope depth to check out the situation, but found the patrol boats too close for comfort so it stayed submerged for about another hour. Around eight that evening, Kapitänleutnant Krech decided to make a run for it believing that as U-558 could make 18 knots at the surface and evade the slower patrol boats (Farb 1985:163-164; Hickham 1989:204).

Once at the surface, U-558's sailors in the conning tower reported seeing a flashing white light astern of the submarine that was then extinguished (Hickham 1989:204). HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was in pursuit and after two hours of chasing, it gained ground on U-558. Realizing that the patrol boat was alone and relatively small, Krech turned his U-boat to fight in the early morning hours of 12 May. Evidently, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's crew did not notice

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this maneuver and continued its chase. U-558 identified its pursuer as a British anti-submarine trawler and two torpedoes were fired, but both missed. Krech repositioned U-558 and fired a third torpedo and saw it hit the trawler's port side causing a massive explosion that nearly lifted the small vessel out of the water (Hickam 1985:204-205). "The trawler had turned at the last moment and the torpedo had caught it squarely amidships. The trawler, which was the *Bedfordshire*, was up on her bow, her stern jerking upward" (Hickam 1985:205). Krech's log noted that he saw a secondary explosion before the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE sank. Continuing its journey south, U-558 encountered another British trawler, the HMS *St. Loman*, a few hours after sinking HMT BEDFORSHIRE, but the Royal Navy was unable to take revenge. Krech continued on to the Gulf of Mexico to pursue merchant shipping along the Gulf Coast (Naisawald 1997:52).

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's destruction was so abrupt and complete that no distress signal was sent. Of the 37 crewmen aboard the vessel, not a single sailor survived. For several days the U.S. Navy was not even aware of the trawler's loss as there were no witnesses, radio distress signals or survivors. The first indication that the trawler had been sunk came when the bodies of deceased crewmembers began washing up on North Carolina's beaches. The Navy launched a search for the trawler with surface craft and aircraft but found no cause or evidence of the loss (U.S. Navy 1942).

On 14 May, the Coast Guard recovered two bodies on the shores of Ocracoke Island, North Carolina. These were the bodies of Sub-Lieutenant Thomas Cunningham and Ordinary Telegraphist Stanley Craig. The men were respectfully buried on a small plot of land provided by a local resident. Nearly a week later, two more bodies were found floating at sea four or five miles northeast of Ocracoke Inlet by the Coast Guard patrol boat USCG 63-067. The bodies were not identifiable, but were dressed in British attire. The two men were buried on the same plot of land as Cunningham and Craig, with their grave markers reading 'unknown British sailor.' A fifth crewman's remains, those of Ordinary Seaman Alfred Dryden, eventually washed ashore near Swan Quarter, North Carolina in late May or June (Naisawald 1997:59-68).

Dryden's body was initially buried near the Hyde County Poor House in Swan Quarter, however, naval investigator Aycock Brown had the body exhumed for inspection and ultimately reinterred it at Oak Grove Baptist Church in Creeds, Virginia. On 21 May, a sixth body washed ashore near Hatteras. Although this body could not be identified, Aycock Brown determined that the body's location and date of discovery meant that it was likely a crewmember of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE. This unidentified sailor was buried near the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse close to another gravesite containing crew from the British tanker *San Delfino* (Naisawald 1997:68).

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The crew's multiple interment sites in North Carolina have become important locations for commemorating World War II history and celebrating North Carolina's maritime heritage. The gravesite on Ocracoke Island receives a great deal of attention and has become an important part of the island's identity. In 1976, as part of North Carolina's bicentennial celebration, the site was leased in perpetuity to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and it remains British Property to this day (Naisawald 1997:80). The site is currently cared for by the Coast Guard Station at Hatteras and Ocracoke and an annual formal service is held at the site on 12 May every year to remember the 37 crewmembers lost when the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE sank.

On 16 May 1942, the U.S. Navy acknowledged HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was missing in action and probably sunk. By 8 June 1942, the British Admiralty officially announced the loss of the trawler and notified the next of kin (Naisawald 1997:66; *Ottawa Journal* 8 June 1942). Four of HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's regular crewmen, Steward John D. Fisher, Stoker Samuel Nutt, Leading Cook Richard Salmon, and Ordinary Seaman Richard Steadman, missed the trawler's departure from port and thus lived to sail again. Nutt and Salmon were on shore leave and after a night at a Morehead City bar were arrested and thrown in jail. Upon their release, with no charges, they went down to the dock to find their vessel had already sailed. Steadman had recently hurt his knee and was transferred to another ship. Historical research has yet to uncover what caused Fisher to miss the trawler's departure from Morehead City (Naisawald 1997:70).

Name	Age	Rank	Nationality
Barnes, Frederick William, RNPS	31	Engineman	British
Bennett, Stanley, RNPS	23	Ordinary Seaman	British
Bickford, Leonard Preston, RNPS	29	Seaman	British
Bowen, Ernest George, RNPS	22	Seaman	British
Carruthers, Edward Sydney, RNPS	20	Ordinary Seaman	British
Cerrino, George Whiley, RNPS	24	Leading Seaman	British
Clemence, William Frederick W., RNPS	21	Ordinary Seaman	British
Clutterbuck, Henry, RNVR	24	Sub-Lieutenant	British
Cragg, Francis, RNPS	18	Ordinary Seaman	British
Craig, Stanley R., RN	24	Ordinary Telegraphist	British
Cunningham, Thomas, RNVR	27	Sub-Lieutenant	British
Davis, Russell Bransby, RNR	29	Lieutenant	British
Davis, Russell Samuel, RCNVR	18	Ordinary Seaman	Canadian
Dick, John Rowan, RNPS	32	Seaman	British
Dicks, Thomas Maxwell, RNPS	28	Ordinary Seaman	British
Dryden, Alfred, RNPS	32	Seaman	British
Duncan, Andrew Watt, RNPS	42	Chief Engineman	British
Featherstone, Geoffrey, RN	21	Telegraphist	British
Fisher, George Henry, RNPS		Stoker 2nd Class	British
Ford, Herbert, RNPS	34	Seaman	British
Hall, Bruce, RNVR		Sub-Lieutenant	British
Kelly, Joseph, RNPS		Seaman	British
Lee, William, RNPS	30	Leading Seaman	British
Lukins, Ernest William, RN	37	Petty Officer Stoker	British
Maltby, Frederick Francis, RNPS	31	Leading Seaman	British
McCauley, James Lorne, RCNVR	19	Ordinary Seaman	Canadian

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McCrinkle, Alexander Allan, RNPS		Seaman	British
McKenzie, Angus, RNPS		Stoker	British
Morton, Ernest Neil, RNPS	20	Ordinary Seaman	British
Myers, William John, RNPS	34	Stoker	British
Smitten, Sidney William, RNPS	20	Ordinary Seaman	British
Stone, Percy Ernest, RNPS	25	Seaman	British
Sweeney, John, RNPS		Ordinary Seaman	British
Travell, Charles James, RN		Ordinary Signalman	British
Watson, Thomas Alexander, RN	26	Ordinary Signalman	British
White, Charles William, RN	29	Ordinary Telegraphist	British
Williams, Leslie Joseph, RNPS	28	Stoker	British

Table 2. HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's casualties.

### CONCLUSIONS

Out of the 24 British trawlers that came to the aide of the United States during World War II, six were lost either off the East Coast or en route to the East Coast. *Northern Princess*, the first casualty, was sunk around 8 March 1942 by a torpedo from U-587 off Newfoundland during the transit with all hands lost. There is no evidence that the *Northern Princess* shipwreck has been located to date.

HMT BEDFORDSHIRE was next to sink by enemy action on 12 May 1942 by a torpedo from U-558 off North Carolina. Again all hands were lost. On 15 June 1942, *Kingston Ceylonite* sank after hitting a German minefield laid by U-701 while on convoy escort duty off Virginia. Eighteen of its 32 sailors perished. The *Kingston Ceylonite* shipwreck lies in 60 feet of water and is a known dive site, but has not undergone archaeological analysis. The remaining trawlers were all lost through collisions; *St. Cathan* off South Carolina on 11 April 1942, *Senateur Duhamel* on 6 May 1942 off Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina, and *Pentland Firth* off New York on 19 September 1942. The *St. Cathan* lies in 90 feet of water, the *Senateur Duhamel* lies in 65 feet of water, and the *Pentland Firth* lies in 70 feet of water. All three shipwrecks are known dive sites, but only the *Senateur Duhamel* has been the subject of an archaeological survey. NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries conducted dives on the site in 2012 and gathered still and video imagery to help interpret the Battle of the Atlantic off North Carolina.

The remaining British trawlers departed the American coast in December 1942. They were sent next to South Africa to combat a new U-boat threat to South Atlantic convoys (Lund and Ludlam 1975:156, 158, 191).

They were slow and ungainly and easily sunk, but in many ways, they would have the Royal Navy's finest moment ever in American waters. Each day, they went out to meet an enemy that was bigger, faster, more heavily armed, and

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able to remain hidden until it was ready to strike. Even though they receive more casualties than they would inflict, they kept coming, fighting America's battle. They were, indeed, "the bravest little ships" (Hickam 1989:208).

The Royal Navy Patrol Service was an integral part of the Allied forces in World War II. At its peak, the service manned 1,637 craft ranging from converted trawlers to corvettes, fuel carries, launches and seaplane tenders. Between September 1939 and May 1945, 260 British armed trawlers were lost in the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, and the Mediterranean. The human toll resulting from these losses is some 15,000 men killed in action and over 2,000 unrecovered bodies (Wilson 2007). HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's wreck site is not only a military war grave for the 31 crewmen not buried on shore, it is a symbol of the Battle of the Atlantic's staggering impact on families around the world.

### WRECKSITE MANAGEMENT

As a sunken foreign military vessel, not otherwise abandoned, disposed of or had its title transferred, HMT BEDFORDSHIRE is still owned by and property of the United Kingdom and considered a Sovereign immune state craft. Furthermore, 37 crewmembers perished during its loss and human remains have been located on the shipwreck site, therefore the wreck is considered a military war grave. NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) and the Royal Navy, as part of the Ministry of Defense of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, are currently drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to manage HMT BEDFORDSHIRE. Under this agreement, ONMS, through the nearby *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary, will continue to document the wreck's physical remains, develop a long term management plan, assist with nominating the site to the National Register of Historic Places and partner with the local community for education and outreach initiatives to share HMT BEDFORDSHIRE's story. The Royal Navy and ONMS have common interests in the protection and preservation of significant underwater cultural heritage such as the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE. The agencies recognize the historical and archaeological significance of the trawler and its associated artifacts. Coordination and collaboration between the agencies will improve the ability to protect, preserve, and manage HMT BEDFORDSHIRE for the enjoyment of present and future generations. As the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary is 76 miles northeast from the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE shipwreck, ONMS staff and resources, also provided by its Maritime Heritage Program, have an increased capacity for responsible research and stewardship activities.

Through the MOU, ONMS intends to manage the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE wreck site with the same professional care as it does comparable property of the United States and consistent with

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NOAA policies and practices as well as the Rules contained in the Annex to the 2001 UNESCO Convention. While the United States has not signed the Annex to the 2001 UNESCO Convention, ONMS has acknowledged in a letter to the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) that, as a matter of practice and policy, ONMS will follow the Annex to the 2001 UNESCO Convention and incorporate the Annex into ONMS guidelines. The MOU regarding the HMT BEDFORDSHIRE, between NOAA and the Royal Navy as part of the Ministry of Defense of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, also states that ONMS will follow the Annex to the 2001 UNESCO Convention. Eight other federal agencies, the National Park Service, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, National Marine Protected Areas, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, Department of Agriculture, Naval History and Heritage Command and U.S. Coast Guard, have also stated that, while the United States is not a signatory of the Annex, they will follow, in practice and policy, the Annex to the 2001 UNESCO Convention. Copies of those letters to SHA can be found online at: <http://www.sha.org/index.php/view/page/letters>.

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NOAA Chart 11520, Edition 44, October 2010

