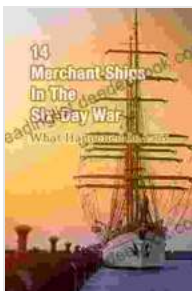# 14 Merchant Ships In The Six Day War: What Happened In 1967

The Six-Day War (June 5-10, 1967) was a swift and decisive conflict that reshaped the Middle East. While the war is mainly associated with intense aerial and land battles, it also involved a little-known maritime campaign that targeted merchant ships traveling to or from Israel. In this article, we will delve into the forgotten chapter of 14 merchant vessels that fell victim to attacks during the Six-Day War.

The Egypt-Israel Blockade

Following the closure of the Straits of Tiran by Egypt in May 1967, Israel's maritime trade was effectively blockaded. In response, the Israeli government initiated Operation Hi-Yakut (Precious Stone),a maritime sabotage campaign designed to force the Egyptians to lift the blockade.

14 Merchant Ships In The Six-Day War: What Happened In 1967 by Sue Astroth

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1017 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 196 pages
Lending	: Enabled

Led by Captain Avraham Dar, Operation Hi-Yakut targeted Egyptian military installations and merchant ships along the Red Sea coast. The operation, however, quickly escalated into a broader campaign against all merchant vessels suspected of carrying weapons or other supplies to Israel.

Attack on the Liberty

One of the most infamous incidents of the Six-Day War's maritime campaign was the attack on the USS Liberty, an American intelligence ship. On June 8, 1967, the Liberty was intercepted by Israeli torpedo boats and aircraft in international waters off the Sinai Peninsula.

The Israelis initially mistook the Liberty for an Egyptian naval vessel and launched an attack that killed 34 American sailors and wounded 171. Despite the ship's clear identification as an American vessel, the relentless attack continued for 75 minutes before the Israelis realized their mistake.

The attack on the Liberty sparked outrage in the United States and led to an official investigation. The results of the investigation were highly critical of the Israeli actions, but no formal charges were ever filed.

Timeline of Merchant Ship Attacks

The attacks on merchant ships began on June 5, the first day of the war, and continued until June 10, when a ceasefire was declared. Here is a timeline of the known attacks:

- **June 5:** Egyptian destroyer sinks Israeli cargo ship "Gila" off Port Said.

- **June 5:** Israeli torpedo boats sink Egyptian cargo ship "Al Amal."

- **June 5:** Israeli torpedo boats sink Egyptian tanker "Al Farouq."

- **June 6:** Israeli torpedo boats sink Jordanian cargo ship "Adh-Dhaher" off Aqaba.

- **June 7:** Israeli torpedo boats sink Jordanian cargo ship "Rabah" off Aqaba.

- **June 8:** Israeli torpedo boats sink Egyptian tanker "Badr" off Port Suez.

- **June 8:** Israeli aircraft sink Egyptian cargo ship "Al Fatah" off Sollum, Egypt.

- **June 8:** Israeli aircraft sink Egyptian cargo ship "Al Hayat" off Alexandria.

- **June 8:** Israeli aircraft sink Egyptian cargo ship "Al Shams" off Port Said.

- **June 8:** Israeli torpedo boats sink Egyptian cargo ships "Qousi Al-Mahalla Al-Kobra" and "Al Qantara" off Alexandria.

- **June 9:** Israeli aircraft sink Egyptian cargo ship "Al Shams" off Port Said.

- **June 9:** Israeli torpedo boats sink Jordanian passenger ferry "Al-Azraq" off Aqaba.

- **June 9:** Jordanian artillery sinks Israeli cargo ship "Bat Yam" off Elath.

- **June 10:** Israeli aircraft sink Egyptian cargo ship "Al Qantara" off Alexandria.

Aftermath

The attacks on merchant ships had a significant impact on the war effort. The Israeli blockade of Egypt and Jordan prevented vital supplies from reaching the front lines, contributing to the Arab defeat.

However, the maritime campaign also raised a number of legal and ethical questions. The attacks on neutral and civilian vessels were widely condemned by the international community, and the incident with the USS Liberty led to a cooling of relations between Israel and the United States.
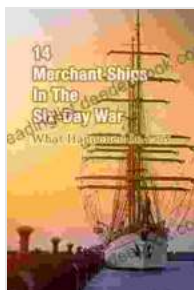

The maritime campaign of the Six-Day War remains a forgotten episode in the history of the conflict. Despite the targeting of merchant ships, the Israelis ultimately failed to break the Egyptian blockade. The attacks, however, had a profound impact on the war and raised important questions about the limits of maritime warfare.

Supplemental Images

- [Israeli torpedo boats on a mission during Operation Hi-Yakut](IMAGE URL)

- [The USS Liberty under attack by Israeli forces](IMAGE URL)

- [Wreckage of the Jordanian cargo ship "Adh-Dhaher"] (IMAGE URL)

SEO Keywords

- Six-Day War

- Merchant ships

- Maritime warfare

- Israeli blockade

- USS Liberty

- Operation Hi-Yakut

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