

The rise and fall of David Lloyd George

Convoy system

The answer was staring the Admiralty in the face – organise the merchant ships in convoys. The Admiralty was sure this wouldn't work. A convoy is a lot bigger than a single ship. Once the U-boats found them there would be a turkey shoot. Obvious. But sometimes the obvious is wrong.

Set against the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean a convoy is not much bigger proportionally than a single ship, almost as hard for the U-boats to find and you can protect a convoy with warships.

The Admiralty was pressed into trying this by, among others, Lloyd George himself and very reluctantly they agreed to give it a go. As soon as they tried the convoy system the rate of sinkings dramatically decreased. The food started to come through. This single lateral jump of logic may have saved Britain from losing the war.