



Naval Monument at Gibraltar

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The Naval Monument at Gibraltar is on the west side of Line Wall Road. Its steps lead down to Reclamation Road and Queensway. It is a stop named "American Steps" for buses on Routes 2, 3, and 4.



Naval Monument at Gibraltar

American Battle Monuments Commission



American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 26 American cemeteries and 29 memorials, monuments and markers in 16 countries. The Commission works to fulfill the vision of its first chairman, General of the Armies John J. Pershing. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I, promised that "time will not dim the glory of their deeds."

American Battle Monuments Commission

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For more information on this site and other ABMC commemorative sites, please visit:

www.abmc.gov

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Photo: ABMC

The inscription on the north side of the monument reads:

ERECTED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO COMMEMORATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMRADESHIP OF THE AMERICAN AND BRITISH NAVIES IN THIS VICINITY DURING THE WORLD WAR

Steps lead downward from the south side of the Naval Monument to the busy harbor; thus its nickname of the "American Steps."

The U.K. Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) maintains the North Front Cemetery near the airport, about 1,500 yards to the northeast of the Naval Monument.

The ancient galley sculpture highlights Gibraltar's role as the key to maritime traffic between the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea from earliest times.



Courtesy of Gibraltar Tourism Board

Submarine Menace

The United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917. The American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) bound for combat in Europe relied upon sea transport. German submarines posed a major threat to the traffic. General John J. Pershing, commander of the AEF, summarized the menace thus:

In the five months ending June 30, 1917, German submarines had accomplished the destruction of more than three and one-quarter million tons of Allied shipping.

Naval Operations

The U.S. Navy cooperated with the Royal Navy and other navies in fighting the submarine menace. Gibraltar was one of its major bases. The Navy's Patrol Force operated there from August 1917 until after the Armistice of November 11, 1918.

Its ships included cruisers, destroyers, Coast Guard cutters, and submarine chasers. The ships attacked German submarines and escorted convoys to and from ports in France and Great Britain.

During July and August, 1918, the Patrol Force escorted 25 percent of all Mediterranean convoys to French ports, and 70 percent of all convoys to English ports from the vicinity of Gibraltar.

General Pershing paid tribute to the Navy's performance in his 1919 final report. He said:

To our sister service we owe the safe arrival of our armies and their supplies. It is most gratifying to record that there has never been such perfect understanding between these two branches of the service.



Source: Naval History & Heritage Command

Destroyer USS Decatur (DD-5) undergoes repairs at the drydock in Gibraltar. She performed patrol and convoy duties from October 20, 1917 to December 8, 1918.



Source: Naval History & Heritage Command

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tampa at Gibraltar. Tampa escorted 18 convoys to Britain before being torpedoed on September 26, 1918. She sank with a loss of all hands.



Source: Naval History & Heritage Command

Scout Cruiser USS Birmingham (CL-2) was the flagship for the Atlantic Fleet Patrol Force operating from Gibraltar.