

14 Merchant Ships In The Six Day War

The Six Day War, which took place from June 5 to June 10, 1967, was a historic conflict between Israel and the neighboring Arab states of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. While the focus of this war is often on military engagements and strategic battles, it is important to acknowledge the role played by merchant ships during this period.

Merchant ships, typically used for transporting goods and cargo, found themselves navigating through the treacherous waters of the Mediterranean Sea as tensions rose in the region. These vessels became significant targets for both Israeli and Arab forces as they aimed to disrupt supply routes and gain a tactical advantage.

Throughout the course of the Six Day War, a total of 14 merchant ships were involved in various encounters and incidents. These ships belonged to different countries and were caught in the crosshairs of a conflict they were not originally a part of. Let's take a closer look at some of the notable merchant vessels that found themselves in the midst of this historic event:



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

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1. SS El Quseir

The Egyptian merchant ship, SS El Quseir, was one of the first vessels targeted by Israeli aircraft on June 5, 1967. The ship was hit and set ablaze, resulting in the loss of life and a significant blow to Egyptian supply capabilities.

2. MV Dunera

The MV Dunera, a British merchant ship, was captured by Israeli forces near the entrance of the Suez Canal. It was suspected of carrying military equipment destined for Egypt, and its seizure provided crucial intelligence for Israeli operations during the conflict.

3. SS Shalom

The luxury liner SS Shalom, owned by the Israeli shipping company ZIM, was caught in the midst of the war while on its way to New York. The ship was ordered to change course and return to Israel due to the escalating hostilities.

4. MV Star of Alexandria

The MV Star of Alexandria, a British cargo ship, was attacked and sunk by Israeli naval vessels during the war. The ship was accused of carrying ammunition and other military supplies for Egypt.

5. MV Iberia

The Spanish cargo ship MV Iberia was intercepted by Israeli forces and brought to the port of Haifa for inspection. It was suspected of carrying arms intended for Arab countries, but no significant evidence was found.

6. MV Shalom Africa

The MV Shalom Africa, another vessel belonging to ZIM, was also caught up in the conflict. It was in the process of unloading cargo in Haifa when hostilities broke out. The ship was forced to remain in the port until the end of the war.

7. MV Ladnyy

The Soviet merchant ship MV Ladnyy was targeted by Israeli aircraft while anchored off the coast of Alexandria, Egypt. The vessel sustained damage but managed to escape to neutral waters.

8. MV Ingbritt

The Danish cargo ship MV Ingbritt found itself in the crossfire when Israeli warplanes attacked the Port of Port Said. The ship was struck by artillery fire and suffered significant damage.

9. MV Jupiter

The Panamanian-registered MV Jupiter was intercepted by Israeli forces near the Strait of Tiran. The ship was suspected of carrying arms, and its capture provided Israel with evidence of foreign involvement in arming the Arab states.

10. SS Carnaro

The Greek merchant ship SS Carnaro was initially intercepted by Israeli naval forces but was later released after inspection revealed no signs of arms or military supplies. It resumed its regular operations after the war.

11. SS Katherine

The SS Katherine was an Egyptian passenger vessel converted into a hospital ship. It was attacked by Israeli aircraft and sustained significant damage. The

ship was eventually salvaged and put back into service after the war.

12. MV Shapira

The MV Shapira, owned by the Israeli company Shapira Shipping, was attacked and sunk by an Egyptian missile while leaving the port of Alexandria. The sinking resulted in the loss of the cargo and crew members.

13. MV Henry Dunant

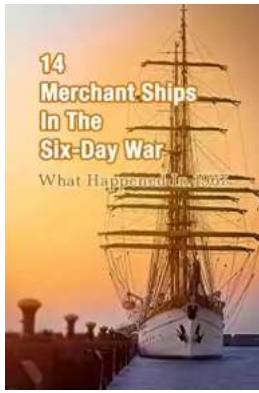
The MV Henry Dunant, operated by the International Red Cross, was fired upon by Israeli forces while attempting to evacuate wounded soldiers from the Sinai Peninsula. The ship was forced to retreat, leaving many injured individuals stranded.

14. SS Port Invercargill

The SS Port Invercargill, a New Zealand cargo ship, was attacked by Israeli aircraft in the Red Sea. The vessel was loaded with cargo destined for Arab countries, making it a target for Israeli forces.

These 14 merchant ships, though unintentionally involved in the Six Day War, experienced the turbulent and dangerous realities of a conflict that reshaped the dynamics of the Middle East. Their presence and encounters serve as a reminder of the far-reaching consequences of war and the unpredictable nature of its effects.

As we reflect on the events of the Six Day War, it is crucial to recognize the stories of these merchant vessels and the individuals onboard who were caught up in the turmoil. Their experiences shed light on the often overlooked aspects of conflicts and the significant role played by non-military entities in times of war.



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The Six-Day War also known as the June War, 1967 Arab–Israeli War, or Third Arab–Israeli War was fought between 5 and 10 June 1967 between Israel and Jordan, Syria, and Egypt.

In June 1967, at the outbreak of the Six-Day War, 14 merchant ships were passing through the Suez Canal. As hostilities erupted, they were ordered to halt in the Great Bitter Lake. Although the war was brief, after it finished, the Egyptian government refused the ship's permission to leave. Those ships were stranded in the Suez Canal for a full eight years, until June 1975. Over the period, 3,000 seafarers served on the trapped ships in the middle of a war zone, maintaining the vessels and protecting their precious cargo. Despite coming from countries on opposing sides of the Cold War, the crews forged a strong community, exchanging supplies and skills and coordinating their social and sports activities through the Great Bitter Lake Association (GBLA). This book tells the extraordinary story, through the eyes of some of the stranded seafarers.



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