

permitted GAF aircraft to shadow the British ships for six days.⁷⁸ However, after the war it would be concluded that evasive routing on the British Isles–Lisbon convoy route was nearly impossible.⁷⁹

In the wake of the battle for Convoy OG 69, it became clear to the British authorities that the force escorting the convoy was ill-constituted and inadequate for the task of protecting the British merchant ships. It was concluded, after the event, that the escort of OG 69, consisting only of corvettes, was in fact very weak and that the force should have included several sloops or destroyers. Corvettes were just too slow to combat U-boats on the surface whilst at the same time they also did not have the communications facilities necessary to effectively exercise command of an escort group.⁸⁰ There were more problems. The ships of OG 69's escort had never before worked together as a group and were commanded by men – Treasure-Jones and Coventry – who had never before commanded an escort group.⁸¹ Added to all the problems of the escort of OG 69 was a further list of shortcomings such as an inability to communicate with friendly aircraft and a lack of sophisticated electronic equipment such as radar. Above all, the battle for OG 69 showed Britain that it would never be able to successfully combat the U-boats and win the battle of the Atlantic until the necessary doctrine and tactics were developed effectively to fight convoy battles and until the escort forces deployed were properly commanded, trained and equipped with all the necessary weapons and electronic devices.

As a result of developments in Allied tactics and technology, almost 22 months after the battle for Convoy OG 69, the U-boats were decisively defeated in a climactic series of convoy battles. In the months after the battle for Convoy OG 69, Britain, which was later joined by America, would build and deploy whole new classes of escorts such as frigates and escort aircraft carriers, as well as develop and deploy electronic devices such as shipborne HF/DF, to combat the U-boats. Perhaps the single most important factor that would account for the subsequent defeat of the U-boats was the deployment by the Allies of very long range anti-submarine aircraft to cover most of the Atlantic, thus affording air support to the convoys. Furthermore, the training, doctrine, co-ordination and command techniques of the escort forces would be steadily improved in the months after the battle for OG 69. The Allied escort forces, which in May 1943 decisively defeated the U-boats, had evolved from the ill-constituted and poorly equipped group of corvettes that had attempted to defend Convoy OG 69 into superbly equipped and highly efficient anti-submarine forces. In contrast to Allied progress, the German U-boats, which were decisively defeated by the Allies in May 1943, used the same weapons systems and were still employing the very same doctrine and tactics as those German U-boats that had attacked OG 69. Victory in the battle of the Atlantic ultimately went to Britain, later joined by America, because, unlike Germany, it was not only capable of deploying new weapons and electronic devices but was also able to develop and adopt new methods, tactics and techniques of anti-submarine warfare with which to defeat the German attack on convoys, and finally because, contrary to its adversaries, Britain was able to learn from its mistakes.