


100 Things About Southend Template

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| Title: | HMS Leigh |
| Date: | September 1939 |
| Location: | Southend Pier |
| Image: |  |
| Image Tag | A Convoy gathers in the Southend Anchorage off HMS Leigh, WW2 |
| Headline: | Southend Pier becomes a Naval Battle Station. |
| Fact 1 | Southend Pier was taken over by the Royal Navy on Friday 25th August 1939. |
| Fact 2 | Captain J. P. Champion. C.B.E., D.S.O, R.N, became N.C.S. Officer, Thames and Medway, on 14th October 1939, and in December assumed the role of Naval Officer-in-Command (NOIC). |
| Fact 3 | A.P Herbert in his book, The War Story of Southend Pier reported that 84,297 ships that sailed from Southend between September 1939 and VE-Day. |
| Fact 4 | The first convoys of the war sailed from HMS Leigh on 7 th September 1939 - F.N.1 to Methil on the Firth of Forth, and O.A.1 to Sierra Leone. |
| Fact 5 | For the first few months of the war, R.N.V.R ratings ran the switchboard, and a Voluntary Messenger organisation was provided by local Sea Scouts. |
| Fact 6 | The Pier Trains covered over 300,000 track miles, carrying 1,500,000 Service men and women, including many sick, wounded and survivors. A number of the train coaches were especially adapted for stretcher cases. |
| Fact 7 | Small ships sailed from Southend Pier during the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940, the skippers were paid £4 and crew members were paid £3 for their service. |
| Fact 8 | Landing Craft sailed from HMS Leigh for the D-Day landings, both Landing Craft (Tank) and Landing Craft (Personnel) had trained in the Thames and River Crouch for the operation. |
| Close: | HMS Leigh was 'paid off' on 15th October 1945 and handed back to the people of Southend-on-Sea. |
| Author: | A Deacon |