

## **Sunderland Model in the Heritage Centre**

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The Heritage Centre welcomes a new model of a Short Sunderland Mk.I, which was the mainstay of Coastal Command long range surveillance and convoy escort in the first two years of WWII.



This Italeri 1.72 scale model is of a 210 Squadron Sunderland based at Oban, Scotland in 1940, Code DA-G, Serial Number L2163. The photograph below shows the aircraft escorting Convoy TC 6, on 31 July 1940. The convoy left Halifax, Nova Scotia on 23 August 1940 and arrived in the Clyde, Scotland on 1<sup>st</sup> September. The convoy included seven Canadian Troopships, escorted by HMS Revenge, a WWI dreadnought battleship, and the light cruiser HMS Emerald.



Sunderlands formed the backbone of Coastal Command's long range capability in the first years of the WWII. Armed with either 500 lb or 250 lb bombs, or eight 250 lb depth charges, and 7 machine guns, the Mk I saw service in the early years of WWII, hunting U-Boats in the Battle of the Atlantic, from bases along the west coasts of England, Wales and Scotland and from Ballykelly in Northern Ireland. Major servicing and engine changes were carried out at **RAF Calshot**, when the aircraft flew down for maintenance, landing on Southampton Water and then being beached on a trolley and undercarriage system, to allow the engineering to be carried out on land.



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They were susceptible to maritime growth on the hull, which was cured temporarily by a landing on fresh water and the subsequent scrubbing effect of the take off. The North Atlantic weather and sea conditions quickly took their toll on the paintwork of the aircraft, as shown in this model. The anti-submarine force was strengthened later by the introduction of the Consolidated Catalina and the Mk I Liberator in 1941 and later by the B-17 and the very long range (VLR) B-24 Liberator aircraft, which effectively closed the 'Mid-Atlantic Gap' in early 1943.