



SEAWOLF

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safari



S.S. THISTLEGORM

Probably the most famous wreck
in the world!



NATIONALITY	➤ British
TYPE	➤ Cargo ship
YEAR OF CONSTR.	➤ 1940
TONNAGE	➤ 4.898 GRT
LENGTH / BREADTH	➤ 127 m / 18 m
SUNK	➤ 06. October 1941
MIN. DEPTH	➤ 18 m
MAX. DEPTH	➤ 31 m
POSITION	➤ Shag Rock, Sha'ab Ali N27°49.032'E33°55.235'

S.S. THISTLEGORM

The ship, 127 metres long and 18 metres broad,

was equipped with a 3 cylinder steam engine with 2 boilers, which supplied 1,860 HP and which gave Thistlegorm a maximum speed of 10,5 knots. As armament it contained a 4.7" artillery cannon and a light anti-aircraft gun from the 1st world war.

Very soon after launching,

it began to show the first problems with the outdated cannon and the steam engine, which made repair work necessary. In August 1941, the S.S. Thistlegorm started in Glasgow, and should deliver important supplies to Tawfiq at the exit of the Suez Canal, via Cape Town and the Red Sea. It was actually only the fourth journey for the nevertheless

still quite new ship. The value of the cargo at that time is to have amounted to 7 million pounds, the ship was cramed full to the upper deck with these supply stocks.

Towards the end of September,

the S.S. Thistlegorm arrived at the same time as other freighters and was under surveillance by the warship HMS



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Carlisle in the Gulf of Suez. Since a tanker blocked the Suez Canal at this time, one had to go to anchor and wait for some days. Meanwhile, in the late evening hours of 5. October 1941, two German Heinkel 111 fighters, were likewise crossing the Gulf of Suez, searching for the Queen Mary.

On the morning of 6. October 1941, both machines flew in search formation in a southerly direction. Since the British admiralty had ordered the Queen Mary a higher speed, this had already passed the point of interception with the fighter-bombers some two hours before – and was thus in safe waters.

During their search for the Queen Mary,

the machines met abruptly at 1.30 a.m. in the morning, with the S.S. Thistlegorm which had been peacefully at anchor for ten days, and turned immediately to attack. There was no more time for return fire, the anti-aircraft gun was already too obsolete for hits, and the consort ship HMS Carlisle, had a wrong firing angle. The first bomb release already led to a desired success: Two bombs hit the S.S. Thistlegorm amidship, and number four hit directly behind the bridge in the holding.

In the year 1956

the wreck was discovered by Jacques Cousteaus. Today, the wreck lies evenly on the sandy sea bed between 16 and 31 metres

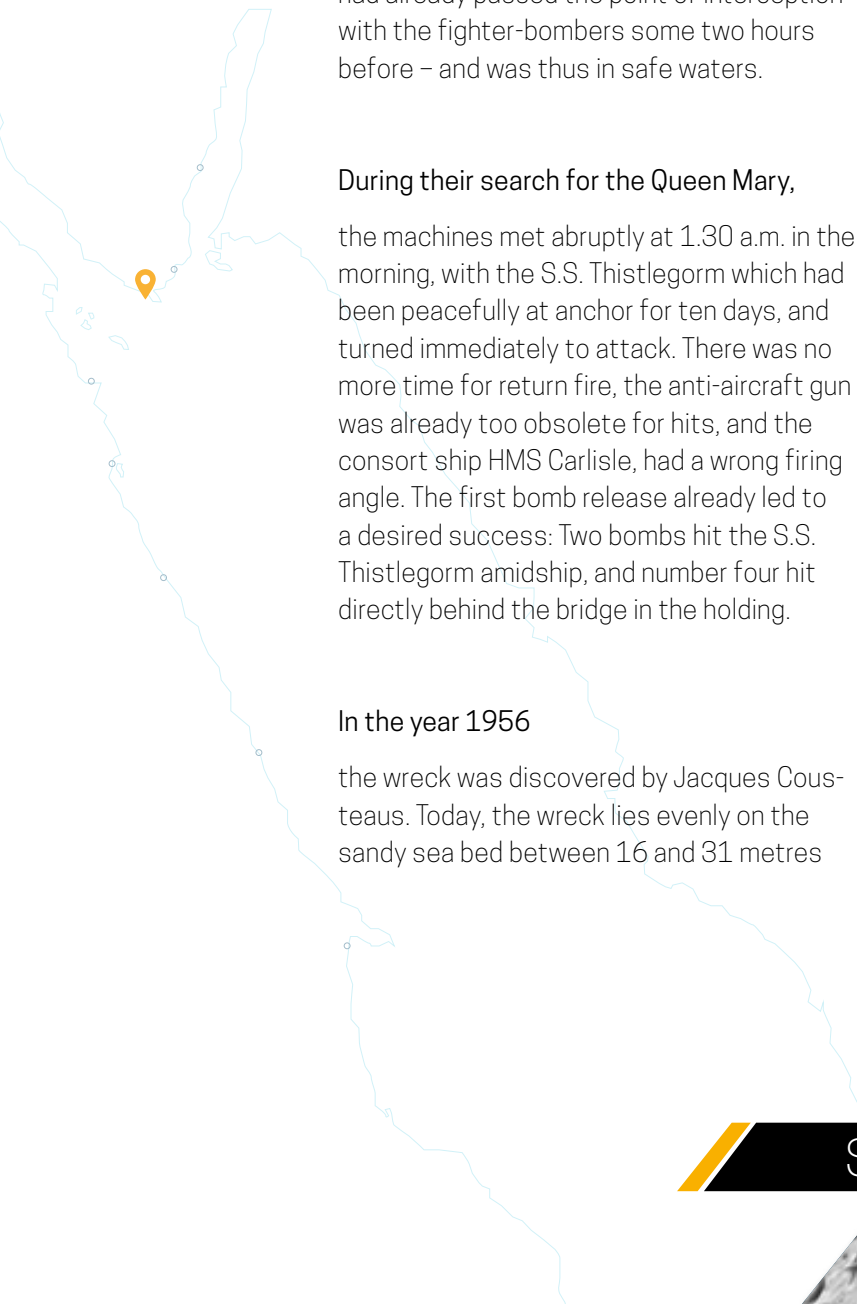
deep. The blown off stern, lies at angle of approximately 45 degrees directly behind the remains of the hull.

The destroyed stern is

laying on the side and round about the ground you find different equipments out of the hold like cables, chests of ammunition and weapons for example. At the quarter-deck there's still a cannon for airplane protection, which level at the ground. You will also recognize the crew area in this section.

On deck have been

two British Stanier 8F-lokomotives, as well as two tankers and tenders of the railway were clamped securely, below deck, located in the holdings were different cars and lor-



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ries. At the same time, in the second holding on the starboard side, there were small army transporters of the Morris Commercial CS 11/30 type and the twotonner Ford.

In addition to this

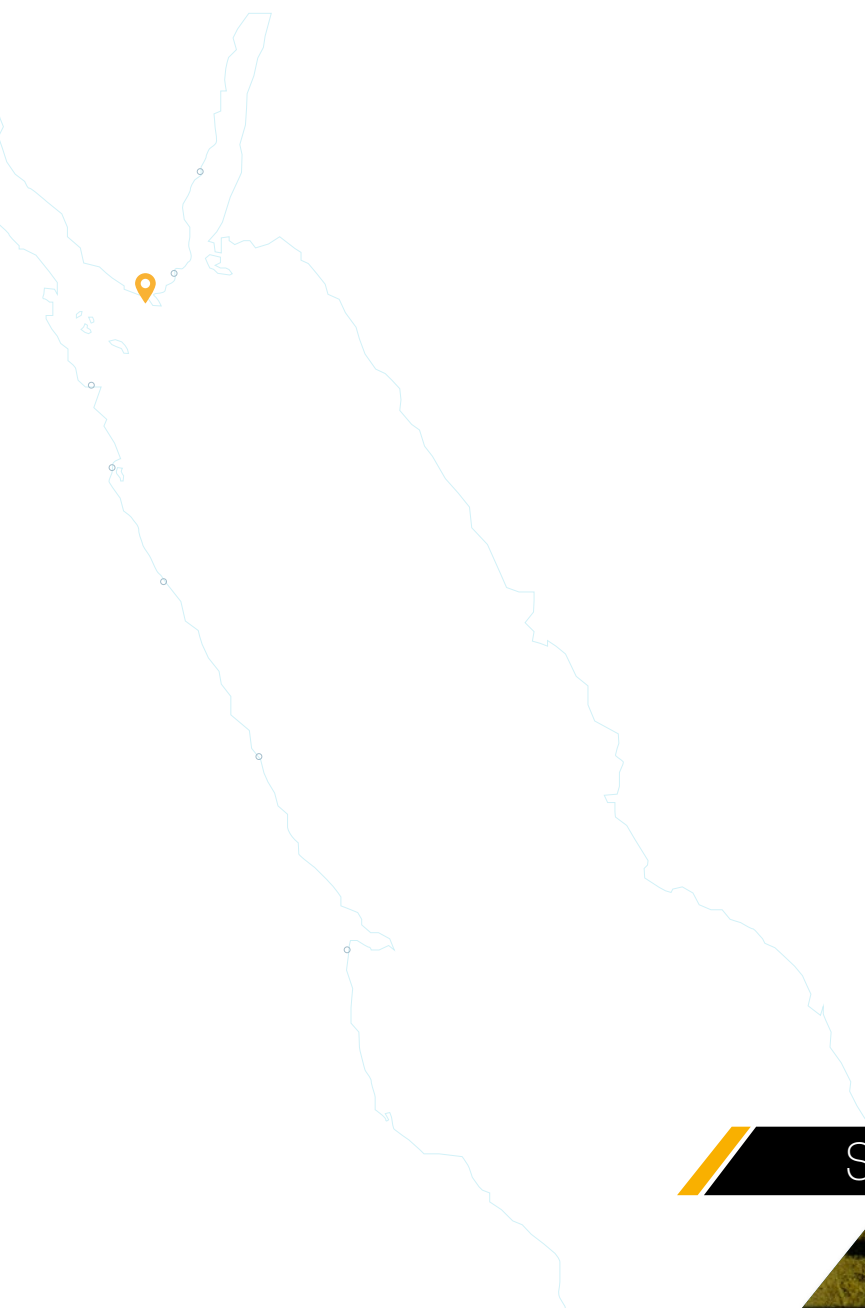
on board are, trucks of the Bedford MW and OYD type. In order to save place, motorcycles were carried on the loading areas of

the lorries. These were two-seat 350 ccm motorcycles of the Matchless G3L type and 500ccmmaschine mark BSA M 20.

For this wreck

you should plan minimum three dives. Diving the Thistlegorm requires a certain experience as there is often to be found a strong current and limited visibility. Therefore you will always descend at a rope.

[Web-Link: S.S. Thistlegorm](#)

An underwater photograph of the S.S. Thistlegorm wreck. The image shows a large, rusted metal structure, likely a lorry, partially covered in coral and other marine life. Several small orange fish are visible swimming around the wreck.

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