EXPEDITION “THE HUNT FOR L72”
FLAG # 207 PRELIMINARY REPORT
The expedition “The Hunt for L72” took place on September 15 through September 26, 2014. The expedition was conducted and organized by the Shipwreck Expeditions Association from Poland and lead by Peter Wytykowski and Roman Zajder. The other members of the expedition were: Michal Szczepaniak, Bartłomiej Grynda, Robert Gluchowski, Marcin Sadowski, Chris Kraska and Agata Radecka. Main goal of the expedition was to locate shipwreck of Polish escort destroyer ORP Kujawiak, which sunk on the northeast cost of Malta on June 16, 1942 during operation Harpoon. After eight months of query in many archives most likely sinking geographical position was determined and searching zone was designated.

September 15 – arrived in Malta late evening and embark on the expedition boat.
September 16 – assembled and prepared all expedition equipment.
September 17 – meeting at the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage office with Mr. Nathaniel Cutajar and dr. Timmy Gambin during which all necessary instructions and permit for the expedition were received. The afternoon activity was to check the proper operation of the expedition equipment on the position of HMS Southwood shipwreck.
September 18 – first day of search for the shipwreck of ORP Kujawiak. During that day waypoints 1-1A through 5-5A started from north to south were searched.
September 19 – day off due to bad weather.
September 20 – Waypoints 6-6A through 10-10A were searched
September-21
Waypoints 11-11A through 17-17A were searched
September 22 – Just after the beginning of search of line on waypoints 18-18A object in the shape and size of the shipwreck in the length of 87 meters showed on the sonar monitor. Unknown object is laying at 97 meters and the stern is pointing north and the bow is pointing south. Shape and length of the object is similar to the Hunt type destroyer. During the search operation the StarFish 425F side scan sonar was used. Length of searched line was set to 2 NM and the width between waypoints was set to 150 meters. Boat speed during the sonar scan was 1,5 knots.
September 23 – After receiving an additional permit from Superintendence of Cultural Heritage to use ROV, the underwater vehicle was used to collect the visual of the found object. During this operation, the underwater vehicle depressurized and was only able to collect a short movie of the object. Detailed analysis of that movie compared with the blueprints of ORP Kujawiak proves without a doubt that it is a shipwreck of the Hunt type destroyer. ROV was able to record midship section with the characteristic wooden slat bench and the curvature of gunwale.
September 24 – Unfortunately ROV was not functioning properly after depressurizing the day before so only video camera was lowered on the shipwreck. During this operation images of the ship bridge with the 20mm machine gun platform with the characteristic “X” shape platform supports was obtained as well as the picture of the characteristic layout of starboard portholes and supporting braces.
September 25 – Continuing to receive more images of the shipwreck including images of the
BOW MAIN TWIN 102MM GUNS.
September 26 – Last day of the expedition - 10:00 am meeting at the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage office to report all activity during the expedition and to hand over all collected data to Mr. Nathaniel Cutajar and Dr. Timmy Gambin. Packing all expedition equipment and departing Malta at 21:00.
Conclusion:
All data collected during the expedition indicates that object found by the StarFish 425F side scan sonar on Monday September 22, 2014 at 11:15 am is a Hunt II type destroyer. The images collected by the ROV and then by the video camera confirm and give no doubt that Hunt II type destroyer was found. Detailed analysis of historical materials and reports from ships taking part in operation Harpoon proves that the described above destroyer is a Polish warship ORP Kujawiak.

Request:
On board of ORP Kujawiak 13 Polish servicemen died and their bodies were never recovered and their remains are still on the shipwreck. It is only right to protect and classify the wreck of ORP Kujawiak as a war grave so the Shipwreck Expeditions Association is kindly asking Maltese authorities to do so and to let Polish heroes rest in peace.

Project will be continued
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