

Wreck of Historic British WWII Submarine Discovered Off Greece

The wreckage of the British WWII submarine *HMS Triumph* which disappeared in early 1942 was discovered at the bottom of the Aegean Sea, in [Greece](#), by a Greek diving team.

The wreck was discovered off the [Sounion Peninsula](#). She rests on the bottom of the open sea with an 8-degree right inclination, tens of kilometers away from the coasts.

Her lowered periscopes and closed manholes testify that the Triumph was in a deep dive during the last dramatic moments before she sank. The depth and direction rudders are in line so it seems she was at a constant depth.

On her turret, the wooden rudder can still be seen as well as her four-inch cannon which is slightly raised. The facing manholes in the gun bay leading to the interior of the hull are closed.

The cap of the starboard torpedo tube, located at turret level, is open and an MK VIII-type torpedo is halfway out of the submarine.

The discovery of the Triumph wreck which claimed the lives of all fifty-nine crew was announced by the diving team of [Kostas Thoctarides](#) which has led to many discoveries of long-lost ships at the bottom of the Aegean and Ionian Seas.

In November 2022, Thoctarides and his team discovered the wreckage of an [Italian submarine](#) that was sunk by the Allied forces in 1941 off Mykonos.

The “Jantina,” which sank on July 5 from the torpedoes of the British submarine HMS Torbay, lay at the bottom of the Aegean without anyone knowing its exact location for more than 80 years.

HMS Triumph (N18) was a T-class submarine of the Royal Navy. She was laid down by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness and launched in 1938.

On 26 December 1939, Triumph hit a German mine in the North Sea. She lost 18 feet (5.5 m) of her bow when it was blown off and her pressure hull was also damaged, but her torpedoes did not detonate. She managed to limp back home under the protection of fighter aircraft and destroyers, and was under repair at Chatham Dockyard until 27 September 1940.

Operating in the Mediterranean from early 1941, Triumph sank several Italian warships. In June 1941 she sank the Italian submarine Salpa near northern Egypt.

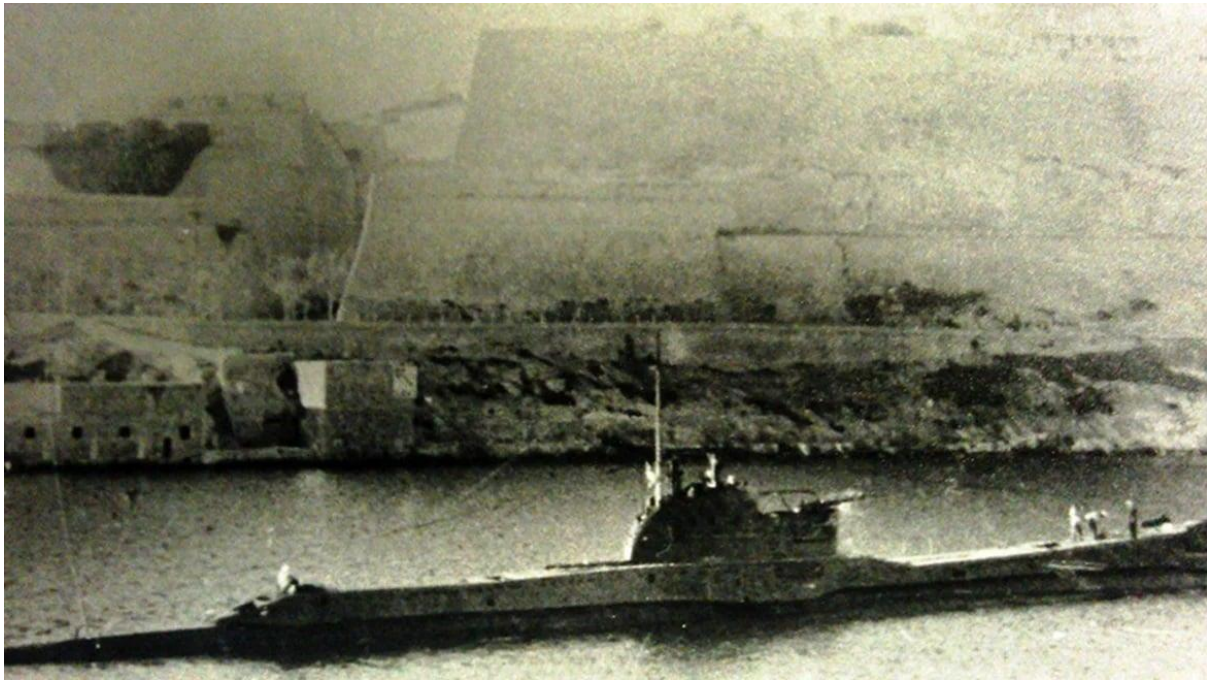
Triumph was also used for covert operations, such as landing agents in German-occupied areas. There were plans to use her as a rendezvous for commandos in Operation Colossus, but this had to be canceled when the landing site became untenable.

She undertook one such mission in December 1941, in which she successfully landed agents at [Antiparos](#), Greece on the 30th. She failed to pick up the agents as scheduled on 9 January, and was lost.

The exact cause of the sinking of the Triumph has been the subject of various theories over the years. Some historians say she was sunk by a torpedo, others claim that she hit the bottom of the sea during maneuvers, or that she hit mines.

“Our investigation continues, mainly at a historical level as new evidence and facts come to light, which combined with the information we now have from the wreck and with the assistance of Navy experts specializing in submarines and torpedoes will reveal the secrets of Triumph,” Thoctarides said.

There is a memorial to her and her lost crew members in All Saints’ Church, Lindfield, West Sussex.



HMS Triumph (N18) seen approaching Malta. Public Domain

MOST SECRET

MOST SECRET MESSAGE 1037D/21st January IN

From C. in C. Mediterranean. Date 23.1.42.
Recd. 1739.

NAVAL CYPHER (D) BY W/T & T/P.

Addressed Admiralty. Repeated Capt. (S) 1, F.O.(S).
396. My 1256B 16th. Regret in absence of further
news H.M.S. TRIUMPH must now be considered lost.
Capt.(S)1 signal casualty list to authorities concerned.

1037E/21.
Advanced Copy P.O. A.C.N.S.(F), N.A.1st S.L.
Ops. C.D. O.I.C.

✓ Reporting TRIUMPH overdue from patrol in Aegean.