

## **THISTLEGORM**

### **HISTORY OF THISTLEGORM**

The shipwreck of the ship Thistlegorm is one of the most interesting shipwrecks in the Red Sea. It is situated on the northern edge of the Gubal isthmus next to the massif reef Shaab Ali. This 9000-ton cargo ship of impressive size (130m long and 18 m wide) was built in 1940 in Sunderland in Great Britain. During the WWII., it served to the Armies of Allies for transport of military material from England to northern Africa. On the 6th October 1941, it anchored near the Shaab Ali and waited for reopening of the Suez Channel. It carried reserves for the British Army fighting in northern Africa - arms, uniforms and military shoes, motorcycles, off-road vehicles, lorries, a locomotive with wagons, spare tyres, a tank, even an airplane and plenty of other military material. At 1.30 o'clock, a German bomber attacked Thistlegorm. It was a very easy target for the bomber. It threw a load of bombs on the ship. Two of them hit the fourth store full of ammunition. The hit caused an explosion that entirely separated the stern from the rest of the ship. The ship sank in an erect position and so it lies on the sandy seabed in the depth of about thirty meters even today. In this condition, it was discovered by Jacques Cousteau in 1956 on one of his first voyages on the board of the ship Calypso. Recreational diving has been carried out on this shipwreck since 1991.

### **EXPEDITION THISTLEGORM**

The expedition Thistlegorm was organized by the base IGC DIVING PRAHA in December of 2004 in close cooperation with the DIVE TOO – Egyptian diving base in Hurghad. This provided the expedition with a big ship, which can sail even on a tempestuous sea, when smaller diving ships cannot sail out. Only this way it was possible that the members of the expedition were alone in the shipwreck and were thus able to make an extensive film and photographic material in calm and without unsettled sediments. However, tens of ships with hundreds of divers

## **IGC DIVING PRAHA**

Expedition - Thistlegorm

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usually park directly above the shipwreck, even at night, when there are still Safari ships. Owing to its popularity and easy accessibility, there are virtually constantly tens of amateur divers in the shipwreck, who make the whole experience worse and essentially impede filming and photographing works.