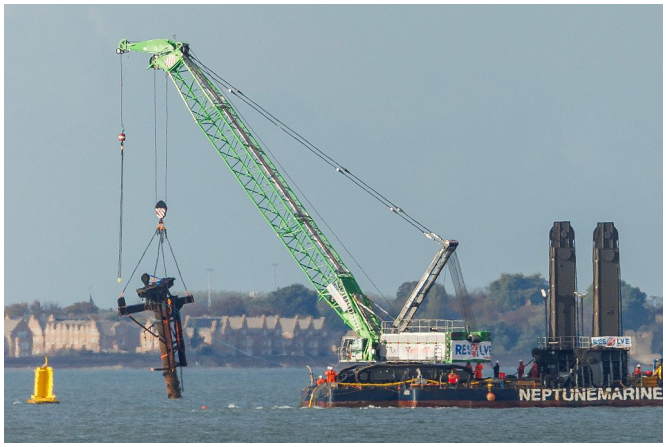
WHY IS A WORLD WAR TWO SHIPWRECK STILL DANGEROUS TODAY?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Engineers have removed three tall masts from the wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery, an American cargo ship that sank in the Thames Estuary in 1944. The ship was carrying weapons and explosives for Allied forces preparing to fight Nazi Germany. Around 1,500 tons of dangerous material may still be inside the damaged hull. When the ship began to sink, workers managed to remove about half of its cargo, but the rescue operation had to stop when the vessel filled with water. The masts remained above the surface for more than 80 years. Experts feared that they might collapse onto the ship and disturb the explosives. A specialist team used sonar, radar, a remotely operated cutting tool and a lifting frame to remove them carefully. The masts have been taken to a museum in Kent, while the wreck remains under constant monitoring.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

World War Two did not end all of its dangers in 1945. Unexploded bombs, wrecked ships and contaminated land can remain dangerous for generations. The Richard Montgomery shows how modern technology is still needed to deal with the physical remains of wartime decisions made more than 80 years ago.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

“How can a war continue to affect people long after the fighting ends?”

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/engineers-delicately-removed-the-masts-from-this-bomb-laden-world-war-2-shipwreck-in-the-river-thames-but-1500-t