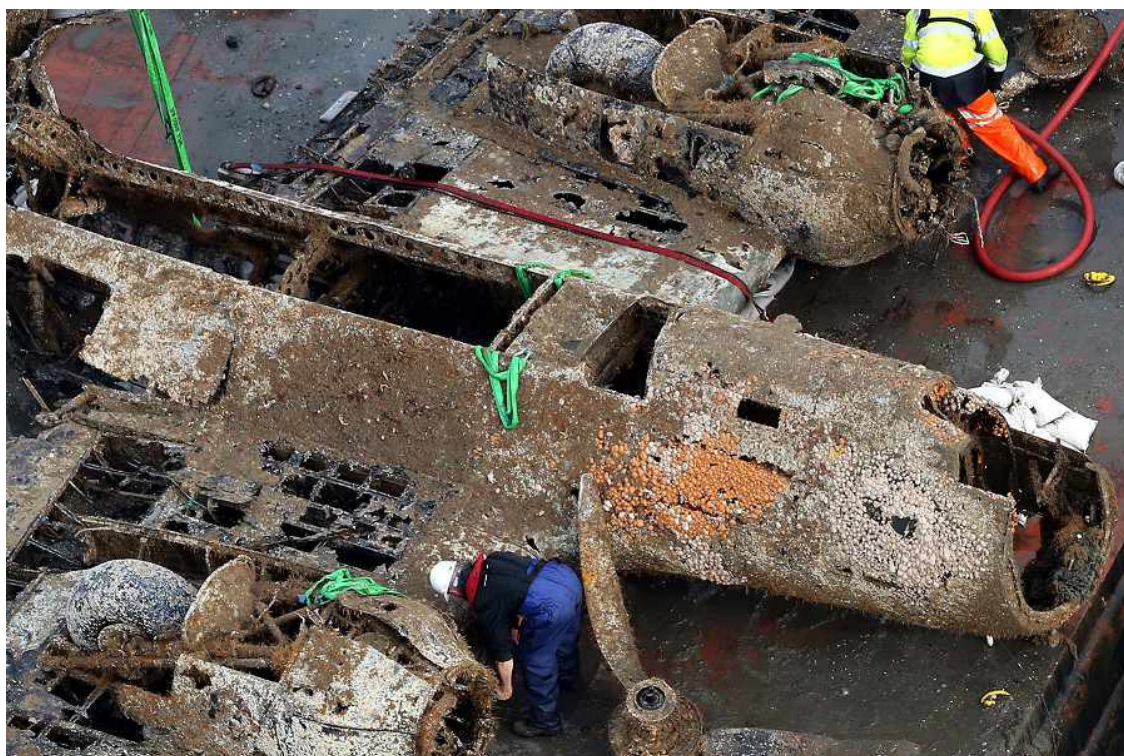


15th June 2013

German bomber arrives at RAF museum

The only surviving German Second World War Dornier Do 17 bomber has arrived at an RAF museum where it will undergo the first stage of conservation.



The aircraft was lifted from its watery grave in the English Channel last week after it was shot down off the Kent coast more than 70 years ago

The aircraft was transported more than 200 miles from Ramsgate to RAF Cosford in Shropshire after being rescued from the Kent coastline.

It was lifted from its watery grave in the English Channel last week after it was shot down off the more than 70 years ago during the Battle of Britain.

The project is believed to be the biggest recovery of its kind in British waters.

The aircraft was headed for purpose-built hydration tunnels at RAF Cosford, where it will stay for the first stage of its conservation.

The adapted plan to raise the plane from the seabed - three years in the making - involved attaching lifting equipment to what were believed to be the strongest parts of the aircraft's frame and raising it whole in a single lift, instead of constructing a cage around it, which had been the original plan.



The existence of the aircraft at Goodwin Sands became known when it was spotted by divers in 2008 at a depth of some 50ft (15m), lying on a chalk bed with a small debris field around it.

Sonar scans by the RAF Museum, Wessex Archaeology and the Port of London Authority then confirmed the identity of the aircraft as the Dornier Do 17Zv Werke number 1160. It was nicknamed the Luftwaffe's "flying pencil" because of its narrow fuselage.

Experts are excited by the find because, apart from the effects of sea life - such as barnacles, coral and marine life, it is largely intact.

Amazingly the main undercarriage tyres remain inflated, although the propellers clearly show the damage inflicted during the bomber's fateful final landing, experts have said. Once the delicate process of conservation is complete, the aircraft will be displayed at the museum's London site within the context of the Battle of Britain story