

The Polish Chapter of the Explorers Club – Report 2018/2019 p. 1

We were pretty busy in the past months. We have chosen some reports to give you the idea of what we are dealing with: from places where you can still see the ghosts of World War II (Kazakhstan, Baltic Sea) to the exploration of one of the deepest cave systems in the world. And we hope to see some of you in Poland, at the ceremony of delivery of the fifth edition of the "Benedictus Polonus" Prize. The ceremony will take place in the Royal Castle of Warsaw on May 15th, 2019,

Mariusz Ziółkowski FI' 02
Chair of the Polish Chapter

New world record of Polish cavers in Lamprechtsofen cave in Austria

The expedition of the Cracow Caving Club, under the direction of Andrzej Ciszewski and Michał Ciszewski, operating in the Salzburg Alps in Austria, on 14.08.2018 connected the Lamprechtsofen cave with the above-mentioned CL-3 cave, increasing the denivelation of the cave system to 1735 m and length to 60 km. This new, record-breaking result strengthens the position of the Lamprechtsofen System as the deepest cave traverse in the world.

Lamprechtsofen Cave, located in the Leoganger Steinberge massif, explored for 45 years by Polish expeditions, reached a denivelation of 1632 m in 1998, becoming the deepest cave in the world and the deepest cave traverse in the world. In later years, deeper caves were explored in the Caucasus mountains in Abkhazia, but Lamprechtsofen remained the deepest cave in Europe and the deepest cave traverse in the world, ie the system with the highest difference in height of the highest and lowest entrances accessible for cavers. Lamprechtsofen cave was explored upwards from the valley level for many years. As a result of extreme climbs the height of +1061 m above the bottom entrance was reached. In the following years, other caves were explored in the upper part of the massif and consistently attached to the system, which currently has 10 main entrances. The spatially developed system of pits, corridors, narrow meanders, galleries and collapse zones makes the Lamprechtsofen Cave one of the most difficult underground cave systems in the world.

(by Andrzej Ciszewski, FI '99)



Karlag – the forgotten Soviet concentration camps in Kazakhstan

During the five months of my mission work, traveling a few thousand kilometers by trains and buses, I have never experienced any unkindness from anybody. Such is Kazakhstan!

In 2018 I was a volunteer in Chromtau, a town built in 1938 by slavery work of deported Poles, Koreans, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Odessa Germans, and after 1945, German prisoners of war. On the old graveyard stand catholic and orthodox crosses and pyramids with the stars. An old German woman told me: “There was nothing here, just the steppe and this hill full of chrome! Many, many died. Died from hunger and cold.”

60 000 Poles from eastern Poland were deported into the depth of the Soviet Empire already in 1936, and almost a million in the years 1940 & 1941. to work in the mines and kolkhozes, and to fall trees in the taiga.

A Soviet concentration camp, Karlag Dolinka, of a size of France was established near Karaganda. There, on the graveyard called Mamochka lie 1200 children, killed for just being less than three years old! Karlag operated during 1936-1956.

Oziornoye, a settlement of deported in 1936 Polish people, today is on the official list of 100 holy places and cultural monuments in Kazakhstan.



(By Cecylia Malgorzata Dziewiecka, FI '11)

Report from the research expedition carried out on the Franken shipwreck “Reduction of the negative impact of oil spills from the Franken shipwreck”

On April 23-28, 2018, a diving expedition took place to the German tanker FRANKEN, located in the central part of the Gulf of Gdansk (Baltic Sea). The purpose of this expedition was to collect as many photos, videos and information as possible, which after processing could be used to create a coherent, technical description of the wreck, which can be used to protect the environment of the southern part of the Baltic Sea.

The main purpose of the article is to present the results of the expedition. This result is a compilation of measurement data, photographic material, as well as samples collected on the seabed, next to the Franken wreck.

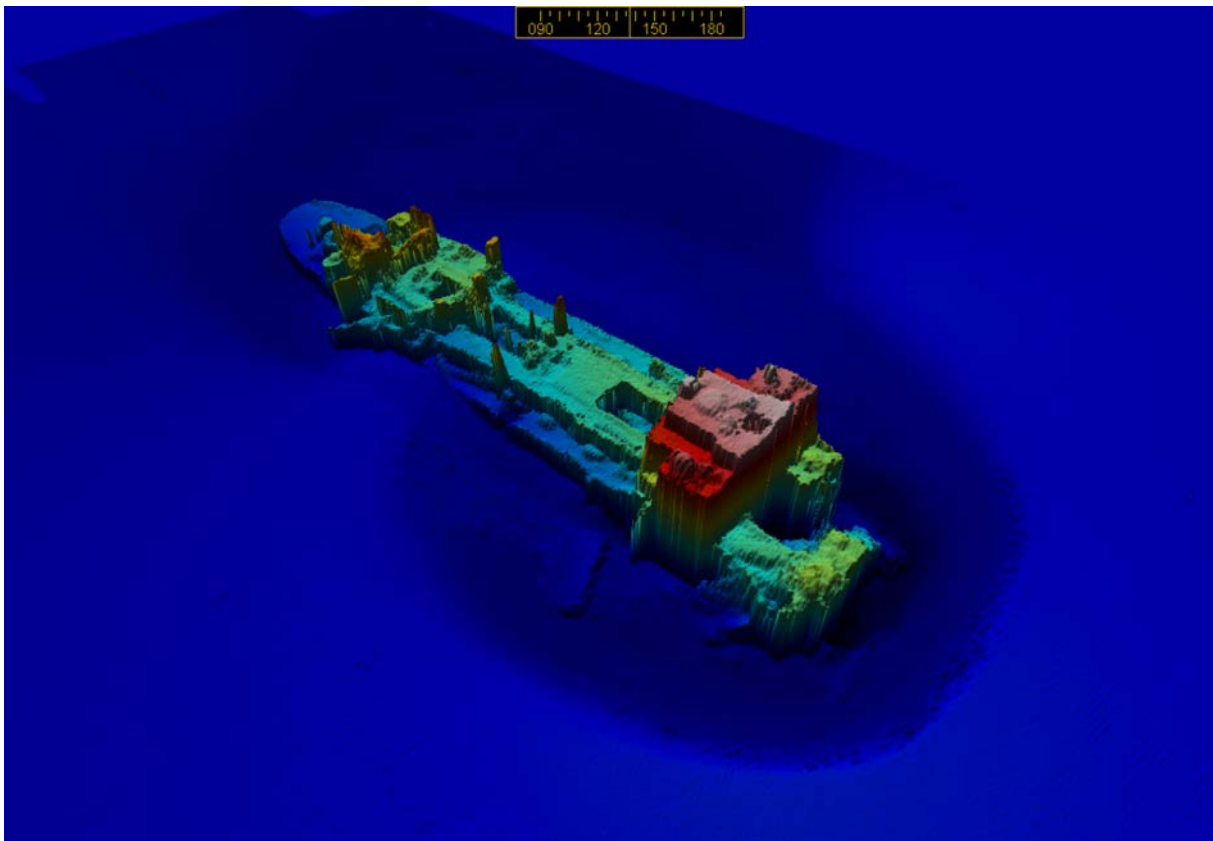
The analysis of the activities carried out and the results of the research is to contribute to the achievement of the two main goals of the expedition:

- limiting the possibility of ecological disaster in the Gulf of Gdańsk by developing and preparing the best technical and ecological plan for recovery of residual oil in the wreckage of the Franken ship and
- to mobilize the political will of maritime administration in the region where the wreck is located, as well as policy-makers to take over responsibility for securing the wreck and to take measures to mitigate the risk of a large oil spill in the region of high nature value

Preparing an action plan to clean the wreck on the basis of our expedition will help show policy makers the scale of the threat to the environment. (by Benedykt Hac, FI '15)



Main deck of tanker © Sławomir Paćko



Wreck of m/v Franken – MBES © J.Koszałka

8th International Shipwreck Festival (February 9th, 2019)

For the 8th time technical divers in love with shipwrecks gathered in welcoming venues of Warsaw University located in the very heart of the Polish capital for the International Shipwreck Festival. More than 400 guests from approx 10 countries attended on one February day 30 lectures, presentations, film screenings and hands-on workshops on everything that matters to exploration of the sunken ships. Just to name a few: Richie Kohler showed the world premiere of „The Perseus Survivor” film that he hosted, Fred Hocker shared the latest news on the research of the famous 400 years old „Vasa” shipwreck wonderfully preserved by his team in Stockholm and David Mearns told the story of discovering HMAS Sydney – and finding not only her fate, but also the wreck of the exact Nazi German vessel that hunted her down using disguise and instant change of flags! The festival program was concluded by Chris Jewell, who – honestly speaking – is not wreck but cave diver, but was welcomed as a hero and daredevil in one. He made CNN and BBC headlines last year when took part in the amazing rescue mission of the Thai football team of dozen children and their coach. His story brought the Warsaw audience to tears and laugh and appreciation. Q&A session was twice longer than planned! It all ended with the elegant banquet at the splendid Column Hall of the university History Department filled with ancient sculptures. Festival was organized by Piotr Wytykowski MN'12 and Roman Zajder MI'12 – with the incredible help of dozen of volunteers – and hosted by Marcin Jamkowski FI'05. If you are into tech/wreck diving and naval/maritime history you have to come to the next edition in February 2021. See you in Poland!

Text by Marcin Jamkowski FI'05

Pictures taken by Marzena Hmielewicz



