

D/V TENACIOUS

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TEAM OF DIVERS LOCATE WEST POINT SHIPWRECK, THE REMAINING CASUALTY OF U-53'S FAMOUS 1916 RAID OFF NANTUCKET

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Atlantic Wreck Salvage (“AWS”), owners and operators of *Dive Vessel Tenacious* (“D/V Tenacious”), today announced that a team of divers has located the resting place of British cargo vessel *West Point*. *West Point* is one of five ships sunk by German U-boat Commander Hans Rose off the coast of Nantucket in October of 1916 in a raid now regarded as one of a series of events that drew America into WWI. Four of the U-53 wrecks were discovered in the 1990s, but the *West Point* had eluded shipwreck hunters until now.

On October 7, 1916, U-53 Commander Hans Rose made an unannounced visit to the Commandant of the United States Second Naval District in Newport Harbor. America had not yet entered WWI. After the visit, during which Rose gave the American Navy and members of the press tours of his U-boat, he set to sea. The next day, U-53 sank five ships south of Nantucket. Powerless to retaliate, the Americans could only watch as the *Strathdene* (UK), *Christian Knudsen* (Norway), *West Point* (UK), *Bloomersdijk* (Netherlands), and *Stephano* (UK) were blown to the depths by German torpedoes and artillery.

The remains of four of the five U-53 victims were located in the 1990s by shipwreck hunter and friend of *D/V Tenacious*, Captain Eric Takakjian, but the locations far offshore and the state of dive technology rendered the ships largely unexplored until the summers of 2017 and 2018 when the *D/V Tenacious* team dived the wrecks and confirmed which was which. Joe Mazraani, Captain of *D/V Tenacious* and Captain Takakjian continued to collaborate on this project and the team used information about the existing wrecks, alliances with local fishermen, and historical data to pinpoint the *West Point*'s final resting place.

“Finding new shipwrecks is a team effort that extends beyond our sonar technicians and divers. Fisherman Steve Cannizzio was an important part of the team who collaborated with us on this exciting discovery,” said Mazraani. “We are pleased to complete the story of Hans Rose’s daring raid in American waters with the discovery of his fifth victim.”

D/V Tenacious Side Scan Sonar Operator Joseph St. Amand, who was instrumental in the discovery, located the wreck on the morning of September 9, 2020 and divers immediately took to the water. “The feeling of seeing the *West Point* for the first time is indescribable. The wreck is massive yet remarkably undisturbed,” said St. Amand who, along with Mazraani, was one the first people to lay eyes on the *West Point* since she sank more than 100 years ago. “It’s amazing we found it, and there is not a better group of people to have found it with than the *Tenacious* crew.”

The *West Point*, a British cargo steamer from the Furness Withy Line, was built in 1912. In addition to obtaining sonar images of the ship, the September 2020 Expedition Team members dived the wreck to confirm her identity. The ship’s size, type, her propulsion machinery, bridge equipment, and location enabled the team to make a positive identification.

The team made three search trips for the *West Point* in 2020. Team members include: John Copeland, Andrew Donn, Michael Dudas, Steve Gatto, Joe Mazraani, Mark Nix, Jack Lawniczuk, Christopher Ogden, Tom Packer, Jennifer Sellitti, Christopher Shannon, Joseph St. Amand, and Tom Zajac.

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About Atlantic Wreck Salvage and D/V Tenacious

D/V Tenacious is a New Jersey-based dive vessel that locates, dives, and salvages shipwrecks in the North Atlantic. Tenacious and her crew have discovered numerous wrecks in the waters off the coast of New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, the most celebrated of which is U-550, the last German U-boat known to rest in diveable North Atlantic waters. Tenacious and her expeditions have been chronicled in the books “Where Divers Dare: The Hunt for the Last U-boat,” “Dangerous Shallows, In Search of the Ghost Ships of Cape Cod,” and in dive publications worldwide. The vessel is owned by Atlantic Wreck Salvage and operated by Joe Mazraani and Jennifer Sellitti. When they are not at sea, Joe and Jennifer work as criminal defense attorneys in New Jersey.

Images attached:

Image 1 – *West Point* in high-frequency detail.

Image 2 – First sonar image of the *West Point*.

Image 3 – Historical photograph of *West Point*. AWS/DV Tenacious does not own the copyright to this image.

Photographs/underwater video footage is available upon request.