

NOTICE TO MARINERS

No. 26 – 2021

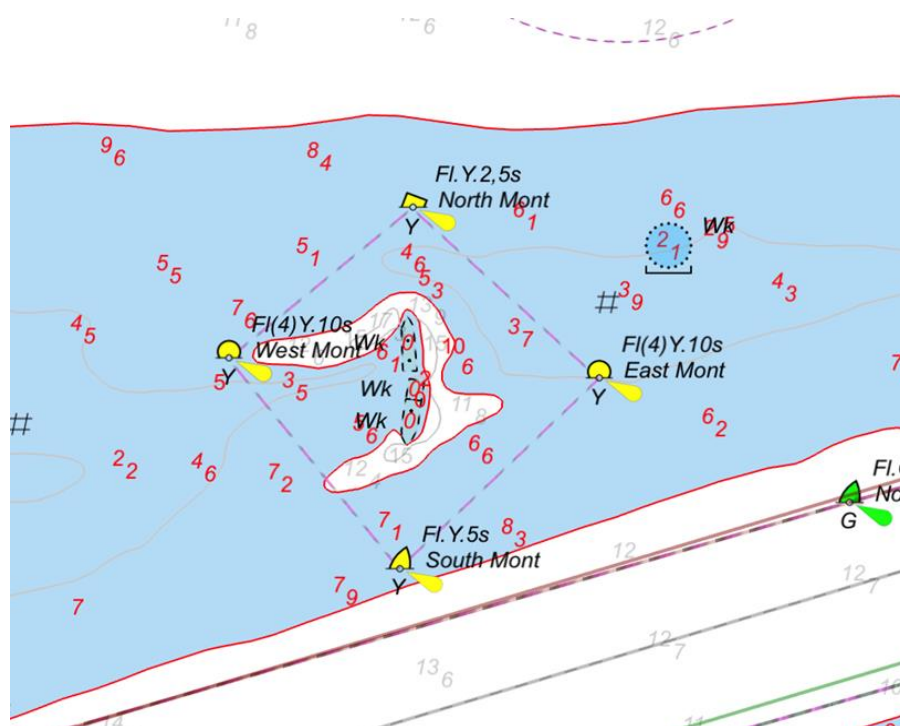
Wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery - Prohibited Area

The SS Richard Montgomery was a US Liberty Ship built in 1943 by the St. John's River Shipbuilding Company, Jacksonville, USA. The ship sailed from the USA to the UK as part of a convoy in August 1944 with a cargo of 7,000 tons of munitions, of which 1,400 tons (Net Explosive Quantity [NEQ]) remains on board in the forward section of the wreck. On arrival in the Thames Estuary, the vessel was directed to anchor in the Great Nore Anchorage, off of Sheerness. However, on the next tide, the ship's anchor dragged and vessel drifted on to Sheerness Middle Sands, a bank running east from the Isle of Grain, to north of the Medway Approach Channel. Approximately half of the cargo was salvaged at the time, unfortunately, the vessel split in two and sank before the remainder of the cargo could be recovered. The wreck now lies in approximately 15 metres of water, 1.5 miles from Sheerness and the Isle of Grain and 5 miles from Southend.

The wreck is designated under section 2 of the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 and there is a **no-entry exclusion zone** around it. The wreck is under 24-hour surveillance by Peel Ports London Medway. The MCA carry out regular surveys of the wreck and its environment in order to monitor its condition, to identify any changes and deterioration and to inform future management strategies.

Statutory Instrument 1973 No. 1690 identifies the prohibited area around the wreck as straight lines joining the following points:

51° 28' 04" N; 00° 47' 12" E - 51° 27' 57" N; 00° 47' 22" E
 51° 27' 50" N; 00° 47' 11" E - 51° 27' 58" N; 00° 47' 01" E



The prohibited area is clearly defined with 4 yellow, special mark light buoys at the N,S,E and W corners with a further 12 orange spar buoys spaced between the special marks (3 on each side). Signage on the 12 spar buoys clearly denotes the area as “Dangerous”

All craft, unless given authorisation by the ‘MCA Receiver of Wreck’, **shall not enter** the prohibited zone. If observed in the exclusion zone, masters/owners will be subject to enforcement actions and risk potential prosecution by the governing body.

Admiralty Chart No. 3683 refers.

Further information may be obtained from Medway VTS on VHF Channel 74, call sign “Medway VTS” or telephone 0151 949 6148.

Marine Operations Department
Peel Ports London Medway

11th June 2021