

My Shot 2

by Borut Furlan

Soon after Slovenia and Croatia were separated from the former Yugoslavia in 1991 diving was free and without regulations in a new country Croatia (and there were nearly no diving centres as well). Since I have my own boat and compressor, I was amongst the first Slovenian divers who dove in the island Vis after separation from Yugoslavia (diving in the island Vis was prohibited in former Yugoslavia due to military reasons).

I was based in a small fishing village named Rukavac (in 1994) on the southern coast of the island Vis. A local fisherman Mate Brajčić, a very friendly old man, told me that when he was a young boy (1944), he saw the plane (B-17) which was landing in the sea just near the coast of the island.

He explained me the position where the plane crashed in the sea and my diving friend Davorin Zupanc started to cruise in this area with his boat equipped with sonar. He soon discovered something on the sonar threw a buoy to mark the position and went diving the next day. He was alone and on air! We all dove on air in these times. The depth was 72 m

and he discovered the wreck. So he was actually the first person, who dove on this wreck (in July 1994).

The next day he invited me. I didn't have problems with nitrogen narcosis, since we all did a lot of deep air dives and were used to nitrogen. And we were young... The visibility was incredible (it is still good today, but definitely not as crystal clear as in nineteen's). And there was a big grouper, hiding below the wing, which disappeared some years later. After this memorable dive I made several dives on this wreck later. The bottom times were typical 15 to 20 minutes and decompression times between 1 and 2 hours. We didn't have stages with nitrox and oxygen for faster decompression (now I dive with trimix of course).

In these times I shot several rolls of film of this wreck and in December 1998 I published a story in a Croatian magazine More (in English: "The Sea"). Immediately after my story was published, Danijel Frka, who got my contact via the chief editor of More,

contacted me. We didn't know each other at the time and he asked me if I can show him the wreck. We arranged the diving in May 1999.

Danijel was extremely excited with this wreck and soon after our first dive he started to research the history behind it.

The most important dates are:
July 1994 - Discovery of the B-17 wreck by Davorin Zupanc
December 1998 - The first published story about the wreck in the Croatian magazine More (by Borut Furlan)



Nikon D850, Seacam housing, Nikonos RS 13mm f/2.8 lens, f/9, 1/8 sec., ISO 400

May 1999 - The first dive of Danijel Frka on the wreck and the beginning of his excellent research work.

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