

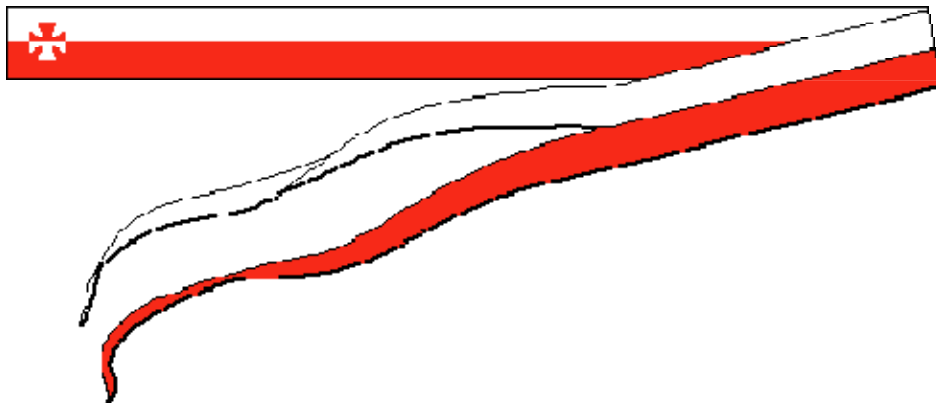
POLISH MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS & MOTOR GUN BOATS OF WW2. (S-1 to S-10)

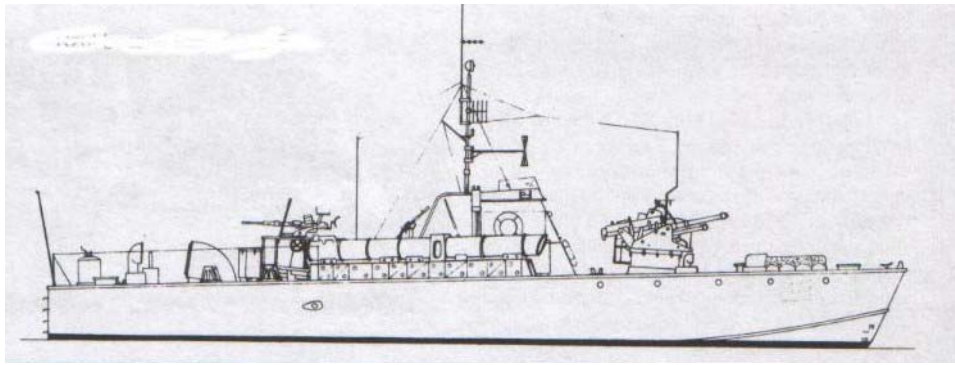
*S = 'SCIGACZE'
(....PURSUER/CHASER)*

A BRIEF HISTORY BY TIM DEACON



Polish MTB 'S-7' on trials as HMTB 426 in the Solent, 1944.





Polish Motor Torpedo Boats and Motor Gun Boats from WW2.

Before WW2, the Polish Government planned to build 17 MTBs, financed from public subscriptions (one from each of the Polish provinces) and originally designated for use in the Baltic Sea. A commission was appointed on the 9th September 1938, to consider various tenders from a variety of shipbuilders.

The Polish Navy was well acquainted with the shipbuilders J Samuel White in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, and a contract for the building of the first two was signed on 24th January 1939, being due to be delivered in March 1940.

Originally, they were to be fitted with Italian 'Isotta-Fraschini' petrol engines, manufactured in Monterosa, Milan, which would give the boats a speed of 41-45 knots. The British Admiralty supervised their construction and they were given yard building numbers 5308 and 5309.

In August 1939 four Italian engines arrived in the UK for the boats, and a Polish Naval Technical Delegate arrived to assist in supervising the construction. In Poland, war was finally declared on 1st September 1939 and work came to a temporary halt; the boats were requisitioned by the Royal Navy, hence the RN numbering (MTBs 424-429) in some official photographs.

The 'Isotta-Fraschini' engines were fitted to the first boat, S-1, but spares proved a problem once Italy allied with Germany, and other engines had to be sourced, mainly from the USA in the shape of Packard V-12 petrol engines, similar to Rolls-Royce Merlin engines. These powered most of Coastal Forces MTBs and MGBs built in WW2. Other American engines, such as the Stirling Admiral were also sourced. Ultimately, ten boats were built, seven at White's (as Torpedo Boats, S-1 and S-5 to S-10) and three, (as Motor Gun Boats S-2, S-3 and S-4) at the British Power Boat Company in Hythe, Southampton.

The Polish coastal craft were based at, or visited, many English ports including Cowes, Gosport [HMS Hornet], Dover [HMS Wasp], Ramsgate, Felixstowe [HMS Beehive], Lowestoft [HMS Mantis], Portland/Weymouth [HMS Bee], Fowey and Dartmouth. Some also sailed around Lands End, as far as Holyhead [Anglesea] and Milford Haven on training exercises.

The Polish boats were commanded by junior officers, in their early 20's, who rotated frequently and often commanded more than one boat during their service. The officers and men had a fearsome reputation, and adapted quickly to their situation, many marrying local girls in the areas where they were stationed.

The boats were all wood, the hulls being of 'double diagonal' construction, built and maintained with expertise and wartime pride.

At the end of WW2, most of the surviving boats were put into temporary storage, to be sold by a branch of the MOD, 'The Director of Small Craft Disposals' who offered them at reasonable prices. Many were still in wartime ex-service condition (minus their armament) and some had their original, very expensive-to-operate and somewhat

dangerous, petrol engines installed. Some were re-engined with more economical diesel or petrol/paraffin engines, if they were to be used as motor yachts and some had their engines and gearboxes removed to make more living space in the engine room. After the war they made reasonably cheap living accommodation and at that time moorings were fairly easy to find at moderate cost.

In the text, Polish officer's naval ranks and the British equivalent are as follows:

Pod-Chorazy - **Midshipman**

Podporucznik Marynarki (Ppor. Mar.) – **Sub-Lieutenant**

Porucznik Marynarki (Por. Mar.) – **Lieutenant**

Kapitan Marynarki (Kpt. Mar.) – **Lieutenant Commander**

Komandor Podporucznik (Kdr. Ppor.) – **Commander**

Komandor Kdr.) – **Captain**

Details of Polish Boats numbered S-1 to S-10:

During WW2, S-1 was commanded by Por. J. Sokolowski, Por. T. Dabrowski, Por. E. Wcislicki and finally Ppor. J. Dobrodzicki.

MGB S-1 (the 'S' is Polish for *Scigacze*, meaning **pursuer or chaser**) was ordered in January 1939 and built by the J Samuel White Shipyard in Cowes and delivered in April 1940, at a cost of £31,000. She had the unofficial name of '*Chart*' (meaning, '*Greyhound*'). She served in the 3rd MGB Flotilla and was based in Fowey, Cornwall. She was lost after a fire at sea, together with her CO, Lt. Sokolowski on October 16th. 1940.

Technical data for S-1:

Displacement: 35 tons / 39 tons full load

Engines: 3 x Isotta-Fraschini petrol, total 3450hp/later re-engined with Packards

Dimensions: 75' x 16'6" x 4'6"

Range: 270nm. @ 38kts. / 450nm. @ 20kts. Fuel carried: 5.1 tonnes/100 octane

Armament: 4x 7.6mm

(As completed) 2x 12.7mm

1x 20mm

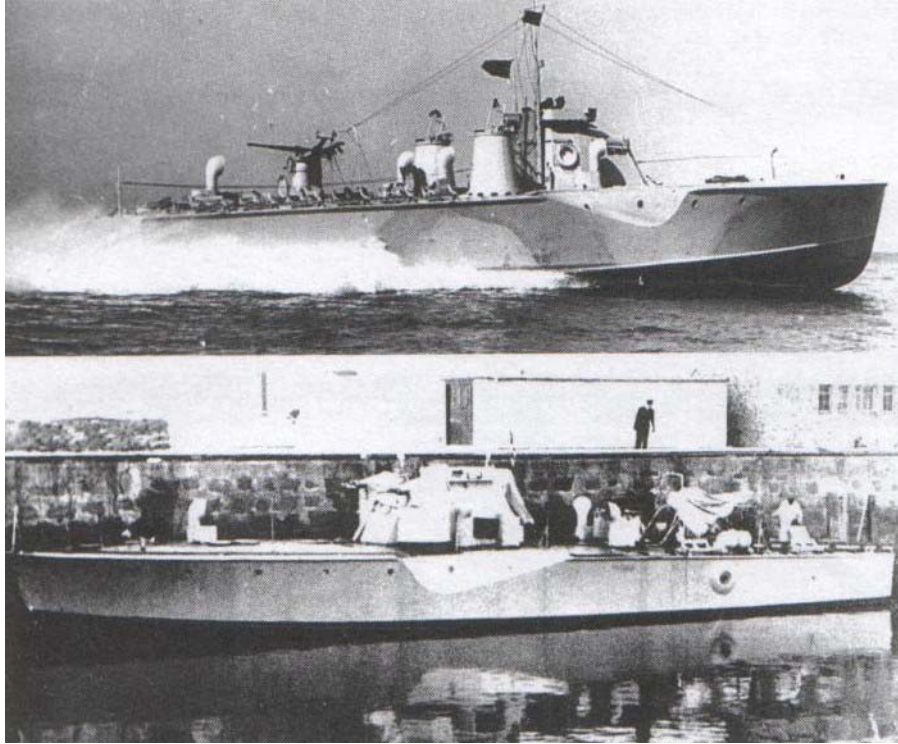
Complement: 12

Speed: 38 – 42 kts.

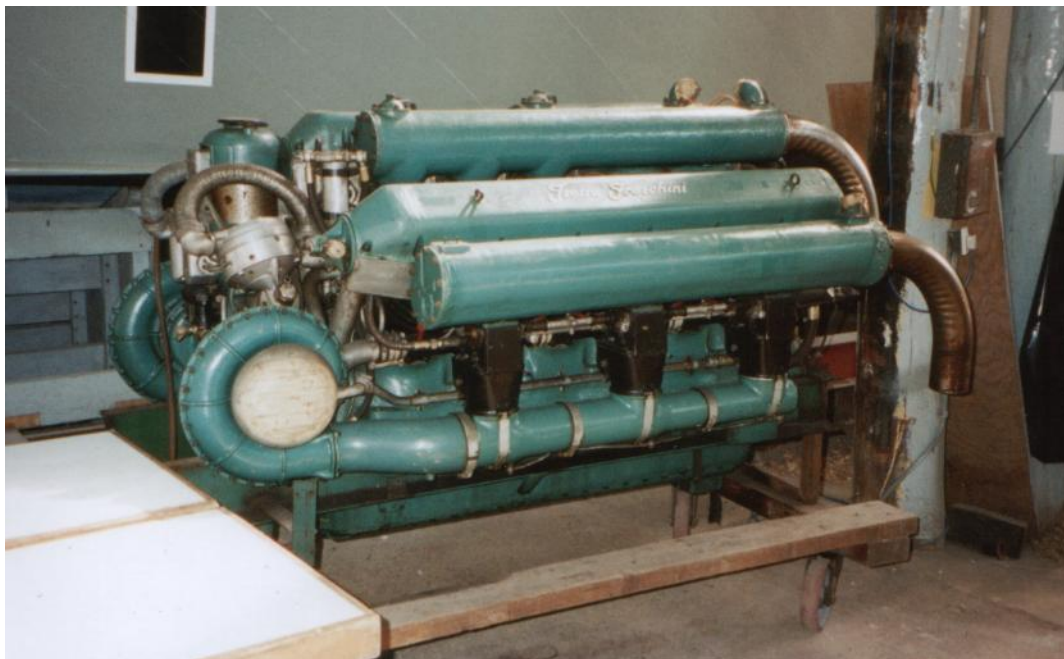


Polish MGB S-1, 'Chart', ('Greyhound').

S-1 was originally designed for use with torpedoes (note the 'scalloped' sheer line next to the bridge), but used as a MGB by the Polish Navy.



*Upper photo: J Samuel White's MGB 47.
Lower photo: White's MGB 48, which became S-1.*



*Italian Isotta-Frascini MTB Engine.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)*

MGBs S-2 and S-3:

During WW2, S-2 was commanded by Por. E. Wcislicki, Por. M. Bochenski, Por. W. Szuster and finally Por. J Krasucki.

These 63' MGBs were designed by George Selman and built by 'The British Power Boat Company' in Hythe, Southampton, originally as MTBs for Norway.

S-2 (unofficial name: '*Wilczur*', meaning '*Wolfhound*'), engaged 6 German E-boats on the night of 22nd June 1944 which were about to attack a British Convoy in the Dover Straits. The skipper, Lt. E. Wcislicki (nicknamed "Whisky", as his name was unpronounceable by most RN sailors!), eventually changed his name to become Captain Westlake RN, and was awarded the DSC and the Polish Virtuti Militari.



Polish MGB S-2 (as MGB 44).

(Illustration: 'Kartonowy Arsenal' card model of S-2)



Polish MGB, S-2 (ex-MGB 44).

(Photo: Geoffrey Hudson Collection)

S-2 paid off on 5th July 1944 and was laid up in Devonport. A Polish Naval Mission inspected her there on 14th March 1947, but as she was considered to be in bad shape, they decided not to take her back to Poland. In 1951 she was apparently used as a 'target boat' for RN gunnery practice.



MGB S-2.
(Photo: Geoffrey Hudson collection)



MGBs S-2 and S-3, in Ramsgate Harbour.



S-2 crew.



Photo taken on board a Polish MGB (S-2 or S-3) at the after gun mount.



Polish Officers on board MGB S-2.

*Sub. Lieut. T. Lesisz, Sub. Lieut. A. Guzowski and lying on deck,
Sub. Lieut. E. Wcislicki (plus one unidentified, probably A. Jaraczewski)
(Photo: T. Lesisz)*

S-3 (unofficial name: 'Wyzel', meaning, 'Pointer').

During WW2, S-3 was commanded by Por. A. Jaraczewski (nicknamed 'Andrew', who later commanded S-7, now houseboat 'Thanet' in Shoreham Harbour, Sussex) and Por. M. Bochenski.

On 4th September 1940, S-3 ran aground on the Goodwin Sands, was re-floated and towed to Dover. In November 1940, she was damaged again outside Fowey Harbour, Cornwall, after an acoustic mine dropped from an aircraft, exploded close by, and had to have extensive repairs made to her hull in Falmouth. In May 1943, because of more damage, she paid off and was stored until she was put up for sale.

In 1977, S-3 (as 'm/v Freelance'), took part in the Royal 'Silver Jubilee' celebrations as part of the 'Thames River Pageant', with Andrzej Jaraczewski and his wife (Jadwiga 'Jaga' Pilsudski, an ex-WW2 Air Transport Auxiliary Pilot) on board.

Port of London Authority
Silver Jubilee Celebrations



Thursday June 9, 1977

River Progress on the Thames
River Pageant
Fireworks Displays

Souvenir brochure and programme 40p

*Cover for the 'Silver Jubilee Celebrations' souvenir brochure
Thursday 9th June 1977 (P.L.A.).*

Today, (February 2007), S-3 is still known as 'm/v Freelance' and is currently moored on the River Medway in Kent, still in fully working condition, although she does not have the original Rolls Royce 'Merlin' engines. [In 2007 she was owned by Gordon Cavell].



S-3/‘m/v Freelance’, engine room.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)

Wartime actions by S-3, are mentioned in the books ‘*The Little Ships*’ by Gordon Holman, (first printed in October 1943), Sir Peter Scott’s, ‘*The Battle of the Narrow Seas*’ (Published in 1945) and ‘*Home Waters MTBs and MGBs at War 1939-45*’ by Len Reynolds (ISBN 0-7509-2274-5).



‘m/v Freelance’/MGB S-3.
She is now moored at Port Werburgh on the River Medway in Kent.
(Photo: Gordon Cavell)

Technical data for S-3:

Displacement: 24 tonnes / 31 tonnes loaded

Dimensions: 63' x 15' x 4'3"

Engines: 2 x Rolls Royce Merlin petrol engines, 1100hp each

Speed: 36 – 40 kts.

Complement: 10

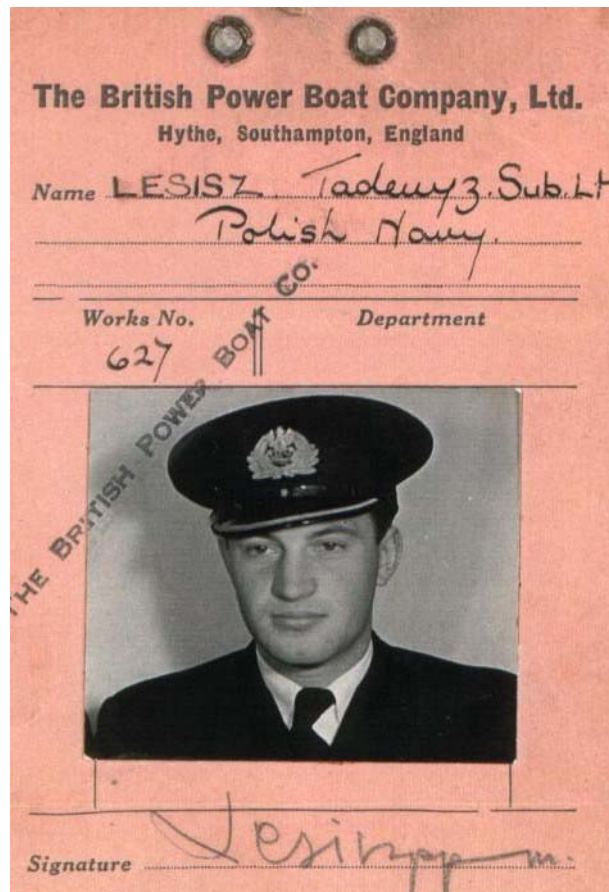
Armament: 1 x 20mm, 4 x .5" M/C guns, 4 x depth charges



MGB S-3/'m/v Freelance'.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)



MGB S-3/'m/v Freelance', wheelhouse interior. (Photo: Tim Deacon)



British Power Boat Company Shipyard Pass for Sub. Lt. Tadeusz Lesisz, S-3.
(Courtesy of T. Lesisz)

In WW2, whilst operating in the Dartmouth/Fowey/Western Approaches area, the officers lived on board the accommodation ship Motor Yacht ‘Sister Anne’ in Fowey Harbour, Cornwall.



Accommodation Ship ‘m/y Sister Anne’ in Fowey Harbour, Cornwall.

MGB S-4

During WW2, S-4 was commanded by Por. L. Antoszewicz.

Built by the British Power Boat Company, Hythe, Southampton, she was originally designated MGB 113 (1943) in the 9th MGB Flotilla and then served as an MTB in 1944. The boat was loaned to Poland in July 1943 and served in the 2nd MTB Flotilla and returned in April 1944. For a short period she became Dutch MTB 432 in the 2nd MTB Flotilla and was apparently sunk in May 1944.

Technical data for S-4:

Displacement: 37 tonnes

Dimensions: 71'9" x 20'6" x 3/5'9"

Engines: 3 x American Packard petrol, total 4050 hp.

Speed: 36/42 kts.

Complement: 12

Armament: 1 x 2 pounder gun, 2 x 20mm, 4 x .303 M/C guns.

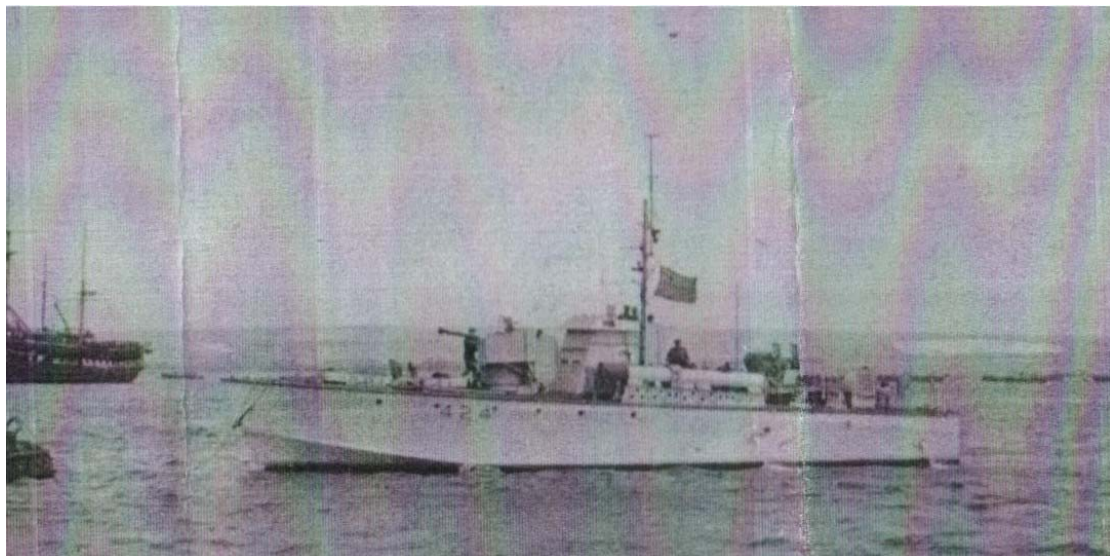
MTBs S-5 to S-10:

These six boats were built by J Samuel White in Cowes, I.O.W, and launched during 1944, and despite extensive 'working up' in the English Channel, did not take part in any enemy action to my knowledge and spent the last few months of the war 'working-up' between Coastal Forces bases around the coast. They served in the '8th MTB Flotilla', under the command of Lt.Cmdr. Witold Szuster.

The British designation of the boats was H.M.T.Bs 424 – 429, prior to handing over to the Polish Navy. They were well armed and carried 2" rockets mounted next to the 6 pound gun on the foredeck, as well as machine guns and two 18" torpedoes.

MTB S-5:

During WW2, S-5 was commanded by Kpt. Mar. W. Szuster and Por. M. Bochenski.



*MTB 424 / S-5 at her moorings, possibly Portsmouth.
(Admiralty photo)*



MTB S-5, probably at Felixstowe.
(Photo: 'Polska Marynarka Wojenna')

One of the Engineer Officers on S-5 was Lt. Anton Piatek; his son, Martin Hazell has written a book ***'Poles Apart'*** (ISBN 978-0-9526455-4-2, published by The South West Maritime History Society) and describes Polish naval memories from WW2, mainly in the Plymouth area.

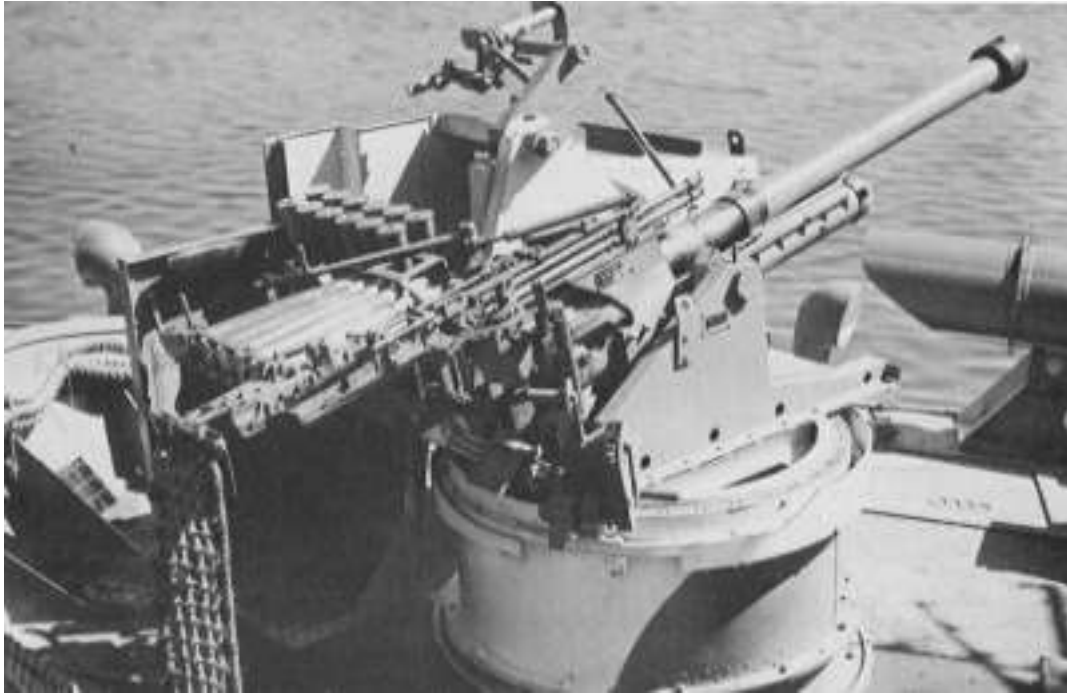
As far as can be ascertained, after the war, S-5 was sold to the Thames Barge owners, 'Horlock's of Mistley', for their own use, but this has not been verified to date.

S-6 (HMTB 425): No service information is available to date. In WW2 she was commanded by Por. J. Dobrodzicki.

S-7 (HMTB 426):

During WW2, S-7 was commanded by Kpt. Mar. A. Jaraszewski.

Most of the official Admiralty photos of this class of MTB were taken of this boat. The photographer 'Beken' of Cowes also took some action shots of this MTB in the Solent when on builder's trials and she was also filmed by an official Polish Navy Film unit in 1944 at speed in the English Channel. The film clip was used in a short 'BBC South' television programme in February 2004 in the series 'Then and Now' when S-7 (known as Houseboat 'Thanet'), was filmed in Shoreham Harbour after being 'rescued' by Mike Gillespie and Therese Erikson. The boat was sunk and in poor condition when Mike and Therese found her and they repaired and fitted her out to make a comfortable home. To my knowledge, S-7 is the **last** Polish MTB afloat of the six originally built in 1944 and as such is an important historic vessel.



6 pdr. QF Naval gun, as fitted to MTBs. The gun and mount weighed 1747 kgs. The feed mechanism for the ammunition was designed by the 'Molins' company who originally produced machinery for cigarette production.



*MTB S-7 at speed, in the English Channel in 1944.
(Photo: Polska Marynarka Wojenna)*



*S-7 as MTB 426 on builder's trials in the Solent, 1944.
(Admiralty photo)*



*S-7 (September 2003) as 'Houseboat Thanet' in Shoreham Harbour, Sussex.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)*

S-8

During WW2, S-8 was commanded by Por. S. Kopecki who also served on S-1 earlier in the war. He emigrated to South Africa after the war. Some details of his wartime service are known, but despite a great deal of research he has not been traced. It is believed that he died in South Africa. S-8 (as HMTB 427) was sold in 1950 by the 'Director of Small Craft Disposals' to a Mr. A. Aitcheson and became 'Houseboat Hippocampus', moored on the River Hamble, close to Bursledon Bridge on the west bank, until 1974 when, due to redevelopment of the foreshore, she was towed to

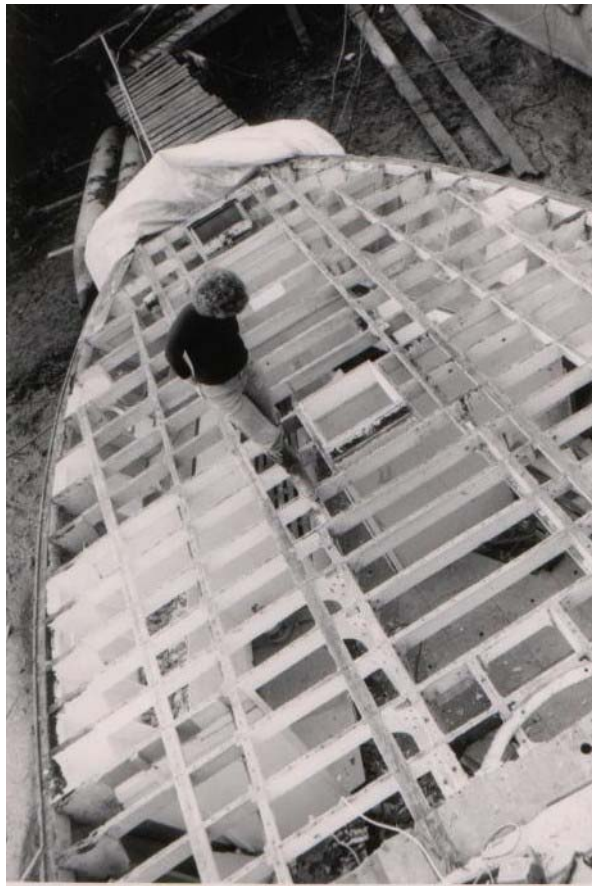
'Belsize Boatyard', on the River Itchen, and bought for £475 by Tim and Beeb Deacon, then moved in November 1974 to Priory Boatyard in St. Denys, Southampton, near Cobden Bridge.



'Houseboat Hippocampus' on the River Hamble, moored downstream from Bursledon Bridge in 1963; she is the white hull behind the black hulled houseboat on the LHS of the photo and is in fairly 'original' condition.
(Photo: 'The Uffa Fox Book of Sailing', published by Longacre Press in 1963).



S-8 being moved into Priory Boatyard, St. Denys, Southampton, on the River Itchen. She was towed from Belsize Boatyard, just downstream, in November 1974, by local fisherman John Green and his boat 'Amazon'.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)



Replacing the deck of S-8 in August 1976. The curved steel support for the 6 pdr. QF foredeck gun, can just be seen in the bottom RHS of the photo.

(Photo: Tim Deacon)

S-8 was renamed '**Whimsical Macgoffley**' (after a mythical 'good luck' character that protected WW2 MTBs against 'gremlins', described in Gordon Holman's 1943 book, '*The Little Ships*'), and over the next four years was extensively rebuilt, re-decked with ½" ply, sheathed with glass fibre. New gunwales were fitted and the old wheelhouse structure removed in 1976, to be replaced with a new one. A lot of internal work was carried out and she was made into a comfortable floating home, complete with coal fired central heating, later replaced with an LPG system.

A few personal memories of S-8, 'Whimsical Macgoffley' by Tim Deacon:

We had a very happy time living on board S-8 for four years, but in 1979, decided to 'move ashore' and we sold the boat to Hedley and Dorcas King for £8000.

Subsequently, S-8 had three other owners; Clive and Anita Rodgers from 1982 to 1986, Norman and Jean Pendlebury from 1986 to 1992, and finally Ian McGillivray, a Whitbread-Round-the-World-Yacht Race Skipper, from 1986 to 1996. Whilst away on the race during 1994-1996, Ian had a 'caretaker', Terri Rawlings living on the boat, who recently contacted me from Russia where he now lives, with memories of his time on board.

To date, despite a great deal of research, I have been unable to trace any of the owners from the time when the boat was berthed on the River Hamble, from 1950 to 1974. In April 2009, a 'Francis Frith' photographic book was published, titled '*I Remember When....Memories of Britain*' (ISBN 978-1-84589-381-1) and it included a copy of a mid-1950s 'Frith' postcard of Bursledon Bridge, which showed 'S-8' on the west bank on the River Hamble, on the site of Deacon's Boatyard (no family connection to

my knowledge!). She was still in 'ex-service condition', with the original wheelhouse and deck fittings, but of course, no armament.

Some original fittings from the boat were retained by me and one of the hammock hooks from the forward crew accommodation was presented to Marek Twardowski, the curator of the Maritime Museum in Gdynia, Poland in September 2005 on board the sail training ship 'Dar Pomorza', to be displayed on the WW2 Destroyer 'ORP Blyskawica' (also built at the J Samuel White Shipyard in Cowes). 'Blyskawica' is still a serving ship in the Polish Navy and was famous for 'saving Cowes', when on the night of 4 May 1942, under the command of Captain Roman Francki, 'Blyskawica', on a refit in Cowes, acted as an anti-aircraft platform when the Luftwaffe tried to destroy Cowes town, dropping over 200 bombs in the area. A commemorative plaque was unveiled on The Parade, West Cowes to commemorate the crew's efforts and a square in West Cowes has been named in memory of Captain Francki.

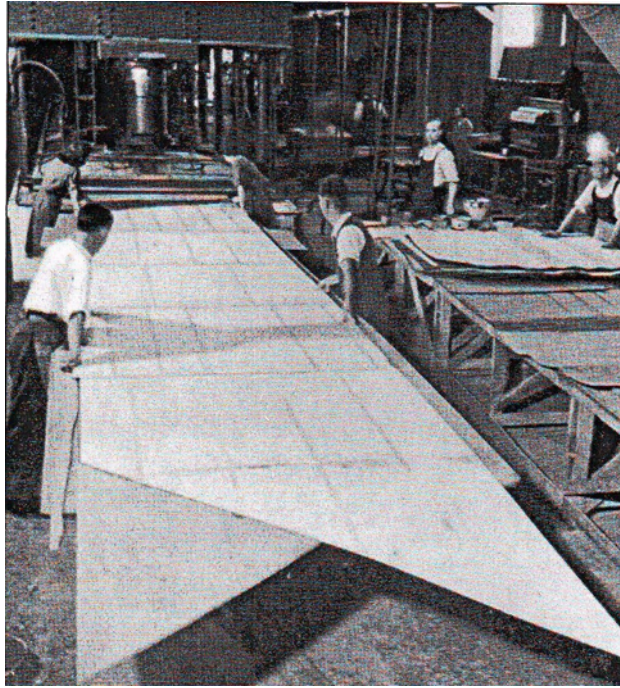


*Tim Deacon, Gdynia Harbour, Poland, in September 2005, with Polish Destroyer 'ORP Blyskawica' in the background.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)*



*The commemorative plaque, to the memory of the Polish Destroyer ‘Blyskawica’, at ‘Francki Place’, Cowes, Isle of Wight.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)*

The actual service number of the boat (S-8) was unknown when the boat was purchased from Belsize Boat Yard in 1974 until, whilst removing the (mainly rotten) original half inch ply deck (incidentally laid in 3 sheets, 6’ wide and 75’ long), the boat’s ‘Piping Installation Plate’ from the engine room was discovered as a ‘repair patch’ and very nearly thrown away. It was inscribed with the words, ‘HMTB 427 Piping Installation’ and confirmed the identity of the boat. The number ‘S-8’ was also found painted on the underside of some of the panels of the lower deck after a bit of searching.



75 foot 'Consuta' plywood panels for the decks of MTBs produced at the 'Folly Works' on the River Medina on the Isle of Wight.
(Photo: 'The Book of Whippingham')

Since 1974, I have been researching the history of S-8 and the other boats in the Polish Coastal Forces MTB and MGB Flotillas.

Much of the original information about S-8 came from a chance meeting with an ex-coastal forces crewman at the 'Wooden Boat Show' in Greenwich in the 1980's; he obtained wartime records kept at the Sikorski Museum in London and passed them on to me. Many of the records, such as the ship's log were in Polish and I had them translated into English.

Sadly, no records exist from the builders, J Samuel White as they were destroyed during the war and little wartime information about the small boats built by White's has been published.

The 'East Cowes Heritage Centre' in Clarence Road, East Cowes on the Isle of Wight and 'The Cowes Maritime Museum' (based in West Cowes Library, I.O.W), have information about the history of White's Shipyard.

There is some excellent information about the 'small ships' and the Polish Navy in Michael Peszke's book ***'Poland's Navy 1918-1945'***. (Published in 1999 by Hippocrene Books Inc. ISBN 0-7818-0672-0).

Another excellent book with many fine photographs is ***'Polska Marynarka Wojenna'*** ('The Polish Navy from the first salvo of the Second World War'), published by the Polish Navy Association in 1947 (now out of print).



*All that remains of S-8.....a small display of boat fittings from the boat.
Engine room 'Piping Installation' plate, draught marks, hammock hook, deadlight support, radio aerial insulator, various brass fittings from the foredeck hatch, brass screws, boat nails, roves and plastic identification plates from the fuel system.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)*



‘Whimsical Macgoffley’/S-8 for sale in 1985; asking price £14500.
(The motor boat moored to starboard of S-8 is ‘m/v Glala’, an ex-Dunkirk Little Ship, once owned by Sir Alan Cobham, the aviator and inventor of in-flight re-fuelling systems. She is now called ‘m/v Mahalia’).

S-8 was eventually broken up and burnt in a ‘Viking Funeral’ in 1996, on the Marchwood foreshore, Southampton Water.



The last, rather hazy, known photo of ‘Whimsical Macgoffley’, on the foreshore in Marchwood, Southampton Water in 1996, taken just before she was burnt.
(Photo: Philip Simons)

S-9:

No details or service history are available to date.
 In WW2, she was commanded by Por. K. Goralczyk.



***S-9 moored up, location unknown, possibly Dover.
(Photo: Polska Marynarka Wojenna 1947)***

S-10

During WW2, S-10 was commanded by Ppor. J. Schreiber and Por. Roman Dulla. 'Jan' Schreiber emigrated to Canada after the war having studied architecture at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, settled in Montreal and lectured architecture at the McGill University. He died on the 21st February 2002 and is buried at St. Sauver des-Monts, Quebec.

I am indebted to Marlowe Sprega-Morris, from Canada, who sent me some photos of S-10, as his father, Kasimiertz Sprega, a crewman on board S-10, took photos when serving on the boat. The last Commanding Officer of S-10, Roman Dulla still lives in West Sussex (2009) and helped in the making of the BBC film about S-7.



Kapitan Marynarki Roman Dulla, Polish Navy, last CO of S-10.



S-10 at speed, torpedo tubes removed.
(Photo: Marlowe Morris, Canada)



S-10 leaving Felixstowe, in 1944.
(Photo: Marlowe Morris, Canada)



Photo of unknown Polish Officer - possibly from MTB S-10.
(Photo: Marlowe Morris, Canada)

S-10, keeping her original Sterling Admiral petrol engines, went to Cornwall after the war and was converted to a private motor yacht, 'm/v Taifun' (Polish for 'typhoon') for an ex-RN Captain, G F Yates, at Falmouth Boat Construction, and was

subsequently used in the 1955 film made by Ealing Studios, *'The Ship that Died of Shame'*, originally a short story by Nicholas Monsarrat. The film starred George Baker, Richard Attenborough, Bill Owen, Virginia McKenna with supporting roles by Roland Culver, Bernard Lee, Harold Goodwin and a few other 'Ealing Studio' regulars.

In the film, S-10 played the part of MGB 1087 'after the war'. In fact, three different MTBs were used during filming, these being S-10, MTB 528 and MTB 'Gay Dragon'.

Sometime after the film was made 'm/v Taifun' was sold by a yacht broker from the River Hamble to a Mediterranean smuggler; the boat being skippered by Hugh Edwards, the brother of the comedian Jimmy Edwards, who motored 'Taifun' to Tangier, North Africa, and she was eventually 'lost' in 'suspicious circumstances' (whilst smuggling!) in the Mediterranean, off the North African Coast near Cape Bon. The story of 'Taifun' under Hugh Edwards' command was at first serialised in *'The People'* newspaper in May 1957, then the complete story was published in the book *'Midnight Trader'* by Hugh Edwards (Published by George Harrap & Co. in 1959).

Technical data for MTBs S-5 to S-10:

Displacement: 39 tons / 46 tons loaded.

Dimensions: 71'6" x 18' x 2'9"/5'6"

Engines: 3 x American 'Sterling Admiral' Supercharged petrol engines. Total 3360 hp.

Speed: up to 40 kts.

Endurance: 240 miles at 24 kts.

Fuel: 100 octane petrol, 2300 gallons

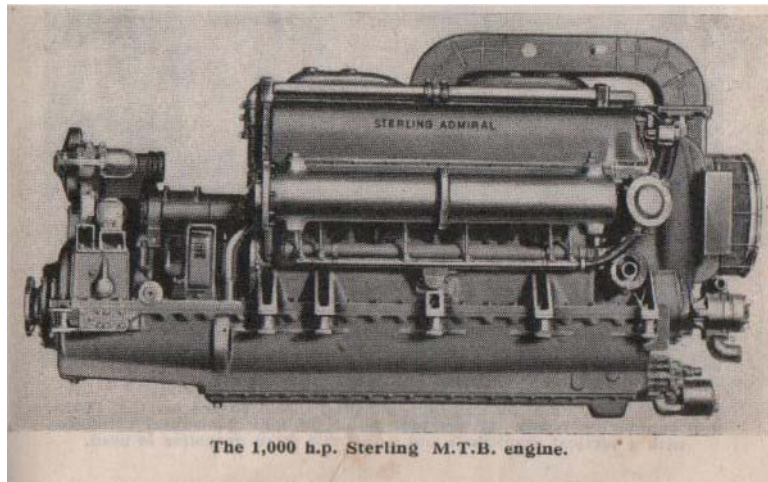
Armament: 1 x 6 pound gun on foredeck, 2" rocket flare projector, 2 x 20mm cannon, 4 x .303 M/C guns, 2 x 18" torpedoes, CSA (Chloro-Sulphonic Acid) gas/smoke producing apparatus..

Complement: 17; 2 officers, 15 men.

Communications: Wireless telegraphy, Echo sounder, 3 x radar sets, Inter-ship R/T. The hulls of these boats were of double diagonal construction, and the decks ½" ply, reinforced in high-stress areas. They proved not to be as strong as the British Power Boat craft, which were built with double diagonal wooden decks and were frequently in dock for repairs whilst in service.



'Polish Navy Association' Crest.



Sterling Admiral 1000 hp Supercharged Engine, used in White MTBs S-5 to S-10. They used 100 Octane petrol. German E-boats were powered by safer, diesel engines. (Illustration from 'Motor Boat and Yachting Manual' 1947)

As far as I can tell, MTB S-7, houseboat 'Thanet', is the last remaining Polish MTB in existence, and 'm/v Freelance', S-3, the last Polish MGB. It is possible that other boats from the original six remain somewhere, but since 1974, when I started to collect information about the Polish boats, I have never come across any reference to them.

Postscript regarding the 1955 film, 'The Ship that Died of Shame' (Titled 'PT Raiders' in the USA):

The black and white film made in 1954, produced by Michael Relph and directed by Basil Deardon at Ealing Studios (in fact the last film made there in the studio's heyday), was based on the short story by Nicholas Monsarrat, and in fact used three different MTBs in the film, HMS 'Gay Dragoon', MTB 528 and S-10.

The commissioned sequences used 'HMS Gay Dragoon', P1050, (without torpedo tubes). Designed by Vosper's, 'Gay Dragoon' was built by J. Taylor of Chertsey, Surrey in 1953, and could be fitted out as an MTB, MGB or minelayer. She was one of the last batch of post WW2, petrol driven (3 Packard engines), wooden MTBs and capable of 40+ knots.



'Gay Class' Fast Patrol Boats moored on the Thames; 'HMS Gay Dragoon' is the boat at the front, RHS of the photo.



HMS Gay Dragoon, P1050 at speed, fitted out as an MTB.

MTB 528 (a Vosper 73', 1944 design), was used in the 'laid-up' footage, filmed at Harry Pound's Portchester scrap yard; Portchester Castle is visible in the background of the film shots.



*Vosper MTB 530
(Similar to MTB528 which was used in the 'scrap yard' sequences in the film)*

Lastly **S-10**, after she had been converted to a private motor cruiser, 'm/v Taifun', at the 'Falmouth Boat Construction' boatyard, Cornwall was used in the 'post war' film sequences. The film used the following locations: The Tidal Basin in Portsmouth Dockyard, Portchester and Poole Harbour, plus some high speed shots filmed in the English Channel. A local motor yachtsman, Dr. Gabriel Jaffe, an ex-Mayor of Bournemouth and an ex-RNVR Surgeon Lieutenant, used his own boat (an ex-RAF Air-Sea Rescue Launch, named 'Reward') as a 'water taxi' for the film crew and actors while the film was being made.



'Taifun' alongside Poole Quay during filming of 'The Ship that Died of Shame'



Bill Owen ('Birdie') and George Baker ('Bill Randall'), on the bridge of MGB 1087.

(From the film 'The Ship that Died of Shame').

Nicholas Monsarrat (1910–1979)



Nicholas Monsarrat, author of *'The Ship that Died of Shame'*, was born in Liverpool in 1910 and was the privileged son of a successful surgeon. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he studied law but his career as a solicitor ended swiftly when he decided to leave Liverpool for London with a half finished manuscript under his arm and £40 in his pocket! He served in the Royal Navy, mainly on corvettes and with the publication of his classic story *'The Cruel Sea'*, became one of the most successful novelists of the 20th century.

The following extract is from the front page of *'The Falmouth Packet'* newspaper, dated September 24th 1954:

'Taifun' goes into action at last – on the films.

Last week, a craft built to take a vital part in the last war as one of the Royal Navy's 'Little Ships', left Falmouth. She is to be used in a film of the adventures she herself was denied by the cessation of hostilities.

The 'Taifun', as she is known, is an MTB, and was to have been used by the Polish Navy. 'V' Day arrived before she was ready for action, and with many other naval craft, she came on the public market. Four years ago, Capt. G.F Yates of Crownick

Woods, Restranguet, purchased her from the Admiralty and converted her for civilian use.

Mr. Yate's affairs have necessitated him being away from the district latterly, so that he readily agreed to a request from Ealing Studios for the use of his boat in making a film. The title of the new film is 'The Boat of Shame'. It deals with an MTB used for smuggling after being in the forefront of the battle of 'the little ships'. Star of the film and skipper of the boat will be Richard Attenborough.

For two years the 'Taifun' has been laid up at a local yard. Last week-end her three 1100 horse power engines were overhauled as she rode her moorings off the Greenbank Hotel. Tuesday afternoon sea trials were carried out, and after refuelling, she left Falmouth on Wednesday afternoon for Weymouth and a life of pseudo adventure.

Her crew for the voyage were Cmdr. L Perry, naval adviser to Ealing Studios and war-time commander of an MTB flotilla; Chief Engineer C.H Bromley, two deck hands and a Merchant Navy skipper employed by the studios.

Wednesday night was spent at Fowey, and the following afternoon Richard Attenborough and a number of other film stars greeted her arrival at Weymouth. Average speed for the voyage was 17 knots.

It is hoped her career as a film star will be unmarred by storms as violent as that described by her name, which is Polish for typhoon.



Bill Owen, as 'Birdie' and George Baker as 'Bill Randall', on the bridge of 'MGB 1087' in the film 'The Ship That Died of Shame'.

ODEON		FALMOUTH Telephone 423
SUNDAY BOB HOPE OCT. 30 BETTY HUTTON LET'S FACE IT (U) 4.45 Open 3.00 Gary Cooper, THE LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER (U) 8.05 3.15, 6.25		
MON., OCT. 31 For 3 Days —Superscope— Barbara Stanwyck Robert Ryan David Farrar ESCAPE TO BURMA Tech. 2.20 5.30 8.40 (A) Sam Wanamaker, M A N D Y THE SECRET Eastman Colour 3.45 7.00 Open 1.45 Last Prog. 7.00	THUR., NOV. 3 For 3 Days Richard Attenborough Virginia McKenna THE SHIP THAT DIED OF SHAME 2.20 5.25 8.30 (A) Sean McClory Joanne Jordan I Cover the Underworld 3.50 7.00 (A) Open 1.45 Last Prog. 7.00	
CHILDREN'S CINEMA CLUB : Satur., Oct. 29th, open 9.30 a.m. : GIRL FROM MONSTERAY (U) Ace Drummond, Ep. 13 Black Hawk, Ep. 2		

Advert from 'The Falmouth Packet' newspaper, October 28th 1955.

In March 2008, I put a display together in the Eastleigh Public Library about the author Nicholas Monsarrat and the book and film of 'The Ship that Died of Shame' as well as the author of 'Midnight Trader', Hugh Edwards which raised considerable interest especially with the large Polish community in the area.



*Display in Eastleigh Library, Hampshire, about the book and film of 'The Ship that Died of Shame' and 'Midnight Trader' in March 2008.
(Photo: Tim Deacon)*

On Plymouth Hoe in Devon, at 'The Remembrance Gardens', Belvedere, there is a 'Polish Naval War Memorial' dedicated to the men and ships of the Polish Navy, in memory of the Officers and men who gave their lives, fighting alongside their British Comrades in the Second World War. It lists all the various Polish ships that took part in WW2, including S-1 to S-10 (listing them as MGBs rather than separating them as MTBs and MGBs). The plaque was originally situated on the Albert Gate leading into the Devonport Dockyard.



Polish 'Virtuti Militari' - The Highest Honour.



Polish Naval Button.



Polish Ensign.

Tim Deacon

Southampton, September 2008 ©

If you have any photos or stories relating to the Polish MGBs or MTBs, during the war or as houseboats after the war, please contact me:

My e-mail is: tim@deacon427.fsnet.co.uk