

LIVE

Teaching Through Nature



What happened to the Torrey Canyon?

The ship left the Kuwait National Petroleum Company refinery at Mina ai-Ahmadion its final voyage on 19 February 1967 with a full cargo of crude oil. It planned to reach the Canary Islands by March 14th and from there travel on to Milford Have.



On 18 March 1967, owing to a navigational error, the *Torrey Canyon* struck Pollard's Rock on the Seven's sisters reef between the Cornish Mainland and the Scilly Isles. An inquiry in Liberia, where the ship was registered, found the ship's captain Pastrengo Rugiati was to blame, because he took a shortcut to save time.

On 28 March 1967, the Fleet Air Arm sent Blackburn Buccaneers planes from Royal Naval Air Station Lossiemouth to drop forty-two 1,000 lb bombs on the ship. Then, the Royal Air Force sent Hawker Hunt jets from RAF Chivenor to drop cans of aviation fuel to make the oil blaze.



However, exceptionally high tides put the fire out and it took further attacks by Sea Vixens from the RNAS Yeovilton and Buccaneers from the Naval Air Station at Brawdy as well as more RAF Hunters with liquified petroleum jelly, to ignite the oil.

Attempts to use foam booms to contain the oil were of limited success due to their fragility in high seas. Bombing continued the next day before the *Torrey Canyon* finally sank.

The wreck now lies at a depth of 30 metres.

