



Trip Report: HMNZS Waikato 3rd January 2010

Mike Smith

INTRODUCTION

This (very) brief report describes the events that took place on Tech Dive NZ's trip to the Waikato wreck at Tutukaka on Monday 3rd January 2010.

BACKGROUND

Tech Dive NZ (hereinafter referred to as TDNZ) has throughout 2009 organised dive trips to various destinations for various purposes, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Training divers, particularly in advanced skills
- Pleasure diving
- Extreme pleasure diving, which entails participants extracting themselves from their respective work environments (skiving off) and diving mid-week. From this practice, the term 'skive dive' was derived.

The writer has participated in all of the above activities and has experienced high scores on his personal elation scale after each.

THIS TRIP

Charter

TDNZ had chartered Hendrick J from Dive!Tutukaka for the day. She was skippered by the ever capable and cheerful Jeroen. Hendrick J departed from the dock at 8:30, 11:30, and 2:30 for the 10 minute trip to the wreck, returning to shore between each dive.

Participants

The divers on the day were Jamie (TDNZ), Mel (TDNZ), Andy (TDNZ), Tristan (Dive! Tuts), Troy (Dive! Tuts), Mike, Astrid, Tony, Chris, Ben, Peter, Alex, and James.

As described below, there were a number of different missions being undertaken on this trip:

Name	Role	Purpose
Jamie	Instructor	Training Tony and Chris – PADI Advanced Wreck course
Tony	Students	Advanced Wreck course
Chris		
Mel	Buddy pair	Detailed mapping exercise of the ship
Mike		
Astrid	Buddy pair	Pleasure dive, exploration
Ben		
Peter	Buddy pair	Pleasure dive, exploration
Alex		
Tristan	Buddy pair	Exploration
Troy		
Andy	Buddy pair	Exploration
James		



Weather

Dive 1, 8:30am:
Sunny and hot. No wind, no swell; oily calm sea.

Dive 2, 11:30 am:
Overcast. Slight seas.

Dive 3, 2:30 pm:
Overcast. Slight seas.

Visibility

Visibility was a little disappointing at about 5m.

Water Temperature

18° C

The Dives

The short trips to the dive site were used by buddy pairs to finalise their dive plans.

Jamie reiterated to Tony and Chris some of the line laying skills that they would be practising. Their day was to be spent honing line laying techniques in preparation for a trip to the Lermontov in a few days time, following lines and conducting searches in simulated zero visibility conditions, and the other requirements of the Advanced Wreck course.

Hendrick J was moored to the line from the helicopter hanger, down which everyone descended.

The Advanced Wreck course guys started off in the hanger area, and everyone else did the best to stay out of their way. Tony and Chris certainly laid some line. Mike recalls glancing upwards through one hatch to see what resembled Grandma’s crochet above.

Mike’s intention was to investigate the ship in detail for the purposes of preparing accurate plans of her. He was armed with laminated copies of preliminary drawings, and was assisted by Mel. Dive 1 was spent on deck 1, with almost every nook and cranny being looked into. Dive 2 was spent on deck 2, but this was a far more cursory inspection due to the enormity and complexity of the task – deck 2 and below will take a lot more dives to complete. Dive 3 was purely a pleasure dive into the bowls of the ship.

Mike’s dives (all using 32% Nitrox) were:

Dive	Max depth (m)	Dive time (min’s)	Average depth (m)
1	27.7	41	19.8
Surface interval	2:40 hours		
2	28.6	36	21.3
Surface interval	2:31 hours		
3	28.3	39	20.7

Andy and James (aka rat-up-a-drainpipe) seemed to spend most of their dives exploring new places, including the insides of air conditioning ducts. Not everyone’s cup of tea, but they were definitely wearing satisfied grins after completing decompression requirements and arriving back on board.



Everyone else did what they intended to do. Some buddy pairs undertook significant penetration of the ship, while others with less experience in the Waikato explored the more open upper decks.

It was noted by all that the Waikato is slowly changing, and has a greater list to port than she had a year ago.

SUMMARY

Another terrific day out on the Waikato; enjoyed by all.

Jamie, Tony, and Chris completed the requirements of the day, and Tony and Chris have acquired training and knowledge that they will put into immediate effect on the Lermontov next week.

Mike was happy with the preliminary drawings of the ship, and is planning further trips to work on them. She is an amazing wreck to explore, and tackling her room by room at a slow pace with a laminated blueprint was quite a different experience for him than all previous trips.

Andy and James just keep on finding new places to squeeze into.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the team at Tech Dive NZ for organising yet another great dive trip, and to Dive! Tutuakaka for being terrific hosts (again). Details of Mike and Mel's dives attached in the Appendix.

