

Diving The Sunda Straits August 2013 – The Wrecks of HMAS Perth and USS Houston

Trip Overview

The wrecks of the HMAS Perth and USS Houston, two heavy cruisers sunk in the Battle Of The Java Sea, are occasionally touched by recreational charters but have received much less technical diving attention in recent years due to lack of local operations able to support it. In 2009 though 2012 we chartered the liveaboard

MB Cecelia Ann and made arrangements to outfit her with double tanks and a gas blending capability. The trips were a great success and we are now chartering the boat for a repeat in late August 2013. In only moderate depths, very reminiscent of the classic wreck USS New York in Subic for example, these large warships, particularly the HMAS Perth, offer some fantastic



HMAS Perth

diving opportunities, with many original artifacts still visible around around the wrecks.

Trip Schedule and Itinerary

Two trips of three days each will be run, with divers having the option to remain on board and do both trips if they wish.

- August 27th - Afternoon/early evening, group transfers Jakarta to Anyer to board the boat and sail that night.
- August 28th – 30th – Diving HMAS Perth and USS Houston.
- August 30th - evening, the boat returns to Anyer or Merak, first group departs for Jakarta and second group boards. Sail late that night.
- August 31st - 2nd - Diving HMAS Perth and USS Houston.
- September 2nd - late afternoon return to port and transfer to Jakarta.

Location and Diving Conditions

The wrecks lie in the Eastern approaches to the Sunda Straits several miles offshore between Java and Sumatra. Nearby smoulders the famous Krakatoa volcano. Our boat is based in Anyer, about a two and a half hour road journey from Jakarta. She will sail at night to be on site by first light, departing for shore after lunch on the third day of each trip allowing guests to transfer evening time back to Jakarta if departing.



The Perth and Houston lie in depths between 30-37m of water. Currents through the straits can be strong and do influence visibility but as for previous years, we have chosen these dates carefully to avoid spring tides. With these moderate depths, good bottom times can be made without having long decompressions to be concerned with. Available gas will be nitrox, with oxygen for decompression. Divers will need to be certified IANTD Advanced Nitrox at a minimum with IANTD (or equivalent) Technical Wreck Diver always a benefit.

The Wrecks Themselves

These two ships were sunk on the night of February 28th/March 1st 1942 in the Battle of The Sunda Straits. Previous days had seen multiple encounters with Japanese forces which had destroyed much of the ABDA (American, British, Dutch, Australian) Fleet, with the Dutch cruisers De Ruyter and Java, and HMS

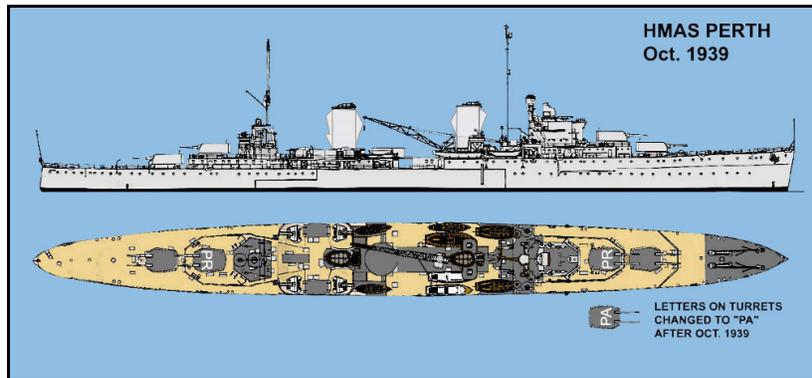


USS Houston

Exeter and Encounter all having been sunk further East off Java. HMAS Perth and USS Houston were ultimately encircled and overcome after an epic struggle, sunk by Long Lance torpedoes from Japanese

destroyers, and heavy gunfire from the heavy cruisers Mogami and Mikuma.

Discovered in 1967, HMAS Perth lies on her port side, she is 169m long and displaced 6,830 tons. At her shallowest point she is at 21m, with a seabed at averaging 36m. Average diving depth is around 30m. The slightly larger USS Houston was a 183m/9,050 ton ship, found in the early seventies, and rests closer to shore just three miles away, starboard side down. Her depth range is 18-34m, previous dives averaged 27m. Evidence of the tremendous battle these ships endured is visible in the form of the damage and the gaping holes left by the torpedo strikes.



The Boat and Facilities

The Cecelia Ann is an 18m wooden ketch built in West Java in 2002. She has ample deck space as well as roomy air conditioned interiors. Cabin space for up to ten guests is available, we will be limiting the trip to six people plus Sam from Tech Asia. The saloon has a colour TV and a good DVD library. Catering is excellent, both Western and Indonesian, with a BBQ on deck being a favorite way to eat.



The MB Cecelia Ann at sea

Generally the vessel is only set up for recreational air diving, with two compressors on board. We will be providing bands and manifolds and assembling doubles, and spending a couple of days ahead of

time to oxygen clean the boats tanks prior to departure to enable us to blend nitrox or other gases on board. Decompression tanks will be Al 80 cu ft (11 liter) cylinders with oxygen, with rigging provided by us.

Payments and Costs

The trip will cost US\$2,270 for six days or \$1,150 for three days.. A 50% downpayment will secure a place with the balance due two months before departure. This trip cost will include

- Road transfers as a group from Jakarta to Anyer and back.
- Use of twin tanks and stage tanks provided by Tech Asia for up to eight technical dives over three days.
- All meals and non-alcoholic beverages whilst aboard the boat.

The cost does not include :

- Gases – subject to any last minute changes in the buy prices, oxygen will cost US\$125.00 for a three day trip, \$250.00 for the full six days.
- Personal diving equipment.

Personal diving insurance such as DAN Masterplan is strongly encouraged.

All inquiries as to availability of places, further details or questions, please

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