

Flinders University Underwater Club – exHMAS Hobart Briefing

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The exHMAS Hobart is an improved Charles F. Adams class guided missile destroyer whose main role was air defence of the Fleet. She was commissioned in 1965 at a cost of 45 million USD. The design of ships of this class was particularly versatile and she had anti-submarine and surface gunnery capabilities. She is 133M long, 14.3M wide and weights 4,720 tonnes. She was known as the "Green Ghost" due to her speed, which made her appear to be able to be in several places at once. She was scuttled in Yankalilla Bay on November 5th 2002.

The ship is sitting upright in 30M of water, with the deck at around 15M depth. The quarterdeck near the stern of the boat is in 22M of water. The forward funnel is in around 7M of water, and the aft funnel is in around 9M of water.

Due to the depth and the currents that exist in the vicinity of the ship, extra care is required to dive her safely.

Open Water divers are limited to a depth of 18M. Only divers who are qualified to penetrate the ship should do so. Diving is no-decompression diving, unless by prior arrangement with the dive organisers and with the appropriate training and equipment.

It is important that all divers descend to the ship and ascend in a controlled manner. We do not want to see divers popping up all over the ocean and getting swept away from the dive site by the current.

When descending, ensure that you are following one of the centre markers down to the ship. These are the diver access buoys and are in line with the large isolated danger marker, which is the largest of the buoys.

<Show divers the top view and side views of ship, and ensure that they are clear on this.>

Access to the ship is possible via the isolated danger marker or diver access buoys. A line will usually be run from our boat to one of the diver access buoys, or divers will be dropped in the water at one of the diver access buoys or isolated danger marker. <Point these out on the top and side views of the ship and pass the sheet around with the top and side views.>

On your way to and from the ship, it is important that divers follow the line from our boat(s) to the diver access buoy, by going hand over hand along the line. During decent, the line that leads from the surface buoy to the ship MUST be followed, again hand over hand (or within 2M for experienced divers), until divers are on the ship. If you come away from the ship during your descent, you may end up hundreds of metres away by the time you hit the surface, and it may also be difficult to spot you in a rough sea as you are taken away by the current. You may also accidentally end up in 30M of water if you miss the deck of the ship. Make sure you descend slowly with your buddy, adding air to your BCD as you descend, and clearing your ears before you feel any pressure build-up. When you are on the ship and as you leave the descent line, take note of the surrounding features of the ship so you can find the same line to return to our boat. Note that compasses can get confused due to the metal in the ship.

The mooring buoys, which form a perimeter around the ship, are fixed to blocks on the seabed, in 30M of water. DO NOT descent down these buoys. Whilst descending, if you reach 12M or a maximum of 17M depth, and you can't see the ship, you're on the wrong buoy. Do not keep descending, as when you hit the sand in 30M, you will not be able to see the ship. You do not

want to be searching for a ship in 30M of water. Ascend safely back to the surface and hold on to that buoy with your buddy. Signal the driver of the boat and find out where the correct descent line is. You will waste far less air this way also.

<Detail tides for the day, which way to head for the first dive and at what time the tide changes after that if required. Tides are Port Adelaide times less 3 minutes, remember to correct for daylight saving time!:

http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-bin/oceanography/tides/tide_predications.cgi >

Note that the bow of the vessel points to the East which is towards the shore, and the current roughly follows the coastline which means that it runs either North-East or South-West.

Note that the tide times are not always accurate for this area. It's always best to stop finning and see which way you are drifting, and be mindful of the current as soon as you enter the water from the boat. It doesn't take long to be swept away if the tide is flowing, so grab hold of a gear or mermaid line as soon as you enter the water.

Discuss and agree upon a dive plan with your buddy and if you haven't dived the ship much consult those who have. Whenever possible, buddy with someone who is familiar with the ship. Always start your dive heading into the current, so you have an easy job getting back. Be aware that the current can pick up quickly in this area, especially between dives.

If doing a double dive, divers may like to tour the stern of the vessel, observing the stern gun, communications dish and aft funnel. Divers may like to head over the aft deck and past the stern handrail to see the huge rudders, but only if suitably qualified and experienced for that depth. For a second dive, or if divers are just doing a single dive, then divers may like to tour the bow to observe the forward gun and see the tip of the bow. The view looking down from the bow at the sonar dome in the sand and back along the foredeck towards the gun & bridge is pretty amazing. Divers may like to see the bridge, as even the captain's chair is still in place. Divers can then finish on the forward funnel, which is directly below the isolated danger marker (large central surface marker). The club's boats can reposition during the surface interval so that the appropriate surface marker buoy can be followed to the area of the ship you want to explore.

Maximum bottom time is as per your dive computer if you have one, or as per the dive tables (see the boat's safety folder) if you have a depth gauge only. Please note that most club regs do NOT have dive computers. They are digital depth gauges and bottom timers only.

Stay close to your dive buddy at all times. Look frequently to see where they are in relation to you. Agree by way of signals when you are going to stop to look around and when you are going to continue on your way, and in which direction. If you lose your dive buddy, look around for a minute or two. If you can't find them, make your way back to the surface via one of the diver access lines that are along the centreline of the ship. If you have stopped to look at a small critter only to find your buddy has kept going, stay where you are for a minute or two. As soon as your buddy realises they have left you behind they can re-trace their path and hopefully find you before you head back to the surface. Make sure that you have a good look at your buddy's gear (fins, mask, suit, tank etc.), as it can be very easy to confuse someone else for them when there are a lot of divers on the ship.

Keep a close eye on your air and make sure that your dive plan starts at the maximum depth you plan to dive, and then work your way towards the surface. Signal 100 bar 'T' to your buddy, and ensure that you ascend slowly (no faster than 9M per minute) deflating your BCD as you go and perform a safety stop (3 minutes at 5M), and hit the surface with at least 50 BAR in your tank.

Always ascend up one of the diver access lines, preferably the one our boat has a line to, or one that is up current from our boat. DO NOT do a free ascent, as again, you will likely end up hundreds of meters from the ship, and it will be very difficult to see you if seas are rough. Please signal the boat sitter that you are OK when you surface, and make sure they respond with OK. Once you are on the surface, if the sea is rough remember to put plenty of air in your BCD to keep your head above the water and breathe from your snorkel (or regs) to avoid swallowing seawater.

If you are down current from the boat, and are unable to swim back, before you get tired out, hold onto one of the diver access buoys, and signal the boat that you're OK. Then, hold one arm vertically in the air to signal that you need to be picked up. The boat sitter will signal back with the same, and will be over to you as soon as they can. If you are in trouble, wave both hands over your head and the boat will be over to you ASAP. Make sure the boat sitter responds with the same signal.

All divers must be carrying a safety sausage, and know how to use it. If you do not have a safety sausage and/or are unsure how to use it please ask after this briefing. If you are drifting away from the ship site, inflate your safety sausage to avoid being run over by other boats and so we can see your location.

For those doing a double dive, we will have surface interval between dives for approximately 1 hour. Those who have computers should be able to use the multi-dive planning capabilities of their computers. For those diving with tables, make sure that you use your tables correctly, and if unsure, please ask. Tables are available in the boat safety folder.

If you feel abnormal in any way during your surface interval or after the dive, please let one of the dive organisers, and your buddy know. If you pass out, at least we know how you were feeling beforehand. Please note that we have emergency Oxygen on board, and have people qualified to administer it. Do not hesitate to ask for help if you are not feeling 'right'. Emergency Oxygen can prevent mild symptoms of DCI/DCS becoming severe symptoms. Better safe than sorry.

Briefing Summary: Dive in an orderly fashion, following surface line and descent buoys and lines hand over hand until divers are on the ship. Do not ascend down a mooring buoy. Ascend up the same line, or a diver access buoy from the centre of the ship that is up-current from the club boat. Do not do free water or blue water ascent. Hold onto a surface buoy if you cannot make it back to the boat. Stay close to your buddy at all times.

Please ensure that you have your Government issued permit to dive the exHMAS Hobart with you <obtained [from http://www.exhmashobart.com.au/dive/permit.html](http://www.exhmashobart.com.au/dive/permit.html)>. Please note that as we will be tying up to the Scuba Divers' Federation SA Buoys, that their "SDF Hobart Buoy Operational Procedure" must also be followed by all divers.
< http://www.sdfsa.net/dive_hobart.htm >

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Have a safe & enjoyable dive!