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Diving the Tolten -August 26, 2007

Perhaps once a season the planets are aligned and the diving conditions are perfect-flat seas, warm bottom temperature and good visibility. Last Sunday was just such a day of diving when the gang from Adventure SCUBA dove the Tolten from the Independence II. The “Indy” is without question the best dive charter boat on the Jersey shore. She is fast, broad beamed and comfortable with an easy exit through a “tuna door” in the transom onto a swim platform right at water level. The dive ladder is short and solid with no sway and minimal bounce. It is an unbeatable combination.

With Captain Dan at the helm we headed southeast from Manasquan Inlet to the wreck site. The Tolten was a Danish freighter originally named the Lotta. She was seized by neutral Chile when Denmark fell to the Nazis and renamed after a city in Chili. As a neutral vessel she never should have been torpedoed. However, just after 2 AM on Friday the 13th in 1942 she was heading from Baltimore to New York City with no running lights. A single torpedo from the U 404 destroyed the Tolten which sank in just a few minutes taking 26 of her 27 man crew to their deaths. This outrage against neutral shipping turned the politics in South America away from the Axis powers.

We were tied into the bow. Descending the “Indy’s” anchor line the bow of the Tolten came into view with the anchor chains at about 65 FSW. Crossing over the deck and descending to the sand at about 95 FSW you pass the port anchor housed in its hawse pipe. While the wreck is still recognizable as a ship she has been wire dragged to prevent it from being a menace to navigation. We explored out in the sand and around the wreck’s many nooks and crannies. Bill Trent as always returned from his dives with bugs.

It’s hard to believe that next weekend is already Labor Day and the summer is coming to a close, but we still have plenty of diving to do. On Saturday September 8th we will again be diving from the Independence II. Early fall is North Atlantic diving at its best. Please join us for some great diving. Call the shop today.

