

On Sunday morning, June 10, 2007, Greg Ondus, Jack Papes, Cindy LaRosa, and Kevin Magee went diving off the "Southwind" with Osprey Charters in eastern Lake Erie. Joining them were Jimmy Herbert (Jr.), Mike, and Don. Unfortunately, five other scheduled divers did not show, but the seas were calm at 0', and the day was looking very good, so Jim Herbert graciously decided to proceed on the scheduled dive anyway. The wreck was the "Andrew B," a barge and crane that sank relatively recently in 1995 in a November storm off Long Point while under tow between Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto. The tow cable broke, and the barge wallowed, rolled, and sank in 185' of water.

Jimmy was to raise the mooring, so he headed in first and also attached a temporary mooring line. Jack was one of the first divers in the water to photograph the wreck before things got too stirred up. That was a good plan because by the time the last divers got to the wreck, the entire end of the barge where the line was attached was silted to only 5'-10' of visibility. Bottom conditions were also very dark and required a strong light to see. No ambient lighting was visible even after one's eye adjusted. Silt wafted down the length of the wreck, but where there was no silting, visibility was approximately 30'-50' with a strong light. The wreck lies on its side with the deck perpendicular to the bottom and the top of the barge at 145' depth. It is braced in this unusual position by the crane, which is still attached at the opposite end from where the mooring was installed. At the mooring's end, a single spud of approximately 3'x3' dimensions is centered in the middle of the barge. It is in its retracted position above the deck and hangs out horizontally over the bottom. The barge is sunken into the mud by 10'-15', and the spud hangs about 10' above the bottom for a length of 30'-50'. At the very end of the spud is a single metal flange. Zebra/quaga mussels heavily cover the length of the spud and were unusual in that all of them were actively filter feeding with large tubes sticking out of them, something not normally observed.

Returning to the base of the spud and swimming to the underside of the barge, the barge can be seen to have a squared end with a slight slope before reaching the flat underside. The end of the spud can be seen protruding slightly from the underside with a pyramid-shaped tip for anchoring it into the bottom. The entire end of the barge also appears to have some sort of raised metal wall, either from a deckhouse or from a wall erected to keep waves from washing over the deck. Due to the very poor visibility in this area, this could not be determined.

Swimming along the length of the barge's centerline towards the opposite end with the crane, not much could be seen, but winches, hanging rubber hoses, and hanging cables were noticed. The A-frame of the crane, which is attached to the sides of the barge near the mooring end, can be seen overhead and underneath as the two frame members head forward and outwards to the tip of the crane. Upon reaching the crane cab at the opposite end of the wreck, it was seen to be unexpected large in size and still attached to the deck. The main boom of the crane comes off the crane's cab and heads outwards towards the apex of the A-

frame. The boom in this direction was not investigated. Equipment can be seen scattered everywhere on the bottom and mounted to the deck. Numerous electrical boxes were seen, and a battery was seen mounted in a cabinet with its surfaces free of zebra mussels. Zebra mussels cover everything moderately, and in places where they are not present, red paint can be glimpsed on the painted structure.

Towards the end of the dive, the temporary mooring was released, requiring a free ascent for one person still on the wreck. Kevin and Cindy's bottom time was 20 minutes, and 20/35 trimix was used with 50% nitrox and 100% oxygen for decompression. Total run time was 57 minutes, maximum depth was 179', bottom temperature was 39-40 deg F, and surface water was about 55 deg F with not much of a thermocline noticed. Surface visibility was about 5'-8'.