

On Saturday, May 13, David VanZandt and Kevin Magee dove the "Boland" in the eastern basin of Lake Erie. Once again, we dove from Jim Herbert's boat "Southwind" of Osprey Dive Charters. The weather, unfortunately, was pretty bad in the morning with strong winds, gray skies, and 3'-5' seas. However, we were not to be deterred and headed out to the wreck, which is only a short distance out of the harbor. The "Southwind" is a big, enclosed boat, so there was never much concern for the weather except for the challenge of getting back onto the boat after the dive.

It was too rough and wet to sit out on the deck once we hit open water out of Barcelona, so everyone moved inside. Unfortunately, it was so rough that one of the rigs - Kevin's, in fact - was bounced out of both of its two bungees and proceeded to crash around the deck until it could be caught. Fortunately, there was no damage to either boat or gear, but it made for an interesting ride holding it down for the rest of the trip. All rigs had to be tied and/or held down for the rest of the ride, and it was still tough to keep things from breaking free.

Once at the dive site, everyone got into the water as fast as possible. The "Boland" is a semi-turtled freighter lying almost upside down but slightly on her starboard side, exposing enough of the superstructure on her port side to do some serious penetrations if properly equipped. We were. The buoy is tied to the stern at the rudder and large propeller, which greets you when you arrive. Dave entered the wreck at the aft portion near the galley and engine room. Silt conditions are bad inside the wreck, and only the person up front gets to see anything. Spaces and turns through the upside down passages can be tight, too. The return has to be done blind with a reel.

Once back outside, we briefly explored along its port side before returning to the up line. Kevin had a leak in his neck seal from the hurried entry earlier, and was actually cold - yes, cold - for once. Getting back onto the boat did indeed prove to be a challenge, although the sea state had reduced slightly to 2'-4'.

The "Boland" is at 135' depth. Maximum depth achieved was 127', water temperature was 38-40 deg. F with no thermocline or significantly warmer surface water evident, bottom time was 25 minutes, and total dive time was 43 minutes.