

USAT Liberty Shipwreck Site in Tulamben, Karang Asem Regency, Bali is Under Threats

Nia Naelul Hasanah Ridwan¹, Semeidi Husrin¹, Gunardi Kusumah¹

¹Research Institute for Coastal Resources and Vulnerabilities

Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Republic of Indonesia

Jl. Raya Padang – Painan Km. 16, Bungus, Padang, West Sumatera, 25245

Email: niahasanah79@gmail.com

Abstract

USAT Liberty shipwreck site located in Tulamben Village, Karang Asem Regency, Bali Province is the most popular shipwreck diving attraction in Indonesia. The shipwreck is well-known throughout the world and brings in many domestic and foreign tourists since the 1980s. This underwater cultural heritage has a historical-archaeological value; it is a US cargo ship that sank during World War II and now the shipwreck functions as an artificial reef and is home to various marine life. This makes the wreck a very important coastal resource of this region and has a significant impact in the local people's life. The condition of the site is currently considered to be vulnerable due to a variety of damage caused by natural and human factors. Threats due to high water dynamics such as currents and waves that could cause erosion, scouring, sliding, and other changes in the physical environment make this shipwreck site highly vulnerable to a variety of mechanical and physical damage as well as chemical weathering and corrosion. The large number of tourists who dive on this site also threatens the site. The marine archaeological research of 2013 conducted by Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries is aimed at studying the deterioration of the wreck, to collect hydrodynamics, sedimentation, and water quality data for providing an overview of recent conditions of this underwater site, the ocean dynamics of Tulamben waters, along with the damages suffered by USAT Liberty wreck which threatens its sustainability as an underwater cultural heritage and diving attraction. Identifying the different types of potential vulnerabilities would become the basis of policy making for its preservation efforts in the future.

Keywords: *USAT Liberty* shipwreck site, Natural and Human Threats, Vulnerability, Dive attraction, Bali