

CHIPPEWA

Launched in 1943 in Charleston, South Carolina, the Chippewa began her life as a 200-foot Cherokee-class U.S. Navy fleet ocean tug, built to haul, salvage, and support Allied operations during World War II. She worked across the Atlantic and Caribbean, laying buoys and assisting wartime logistics while ranging from Newfoundland to Trinidad—and as far east as Casablanca. After the war, she was decommissioned in 1947 and spent decades in reserve before resurfacing in Panama City as a training platform for the Navy Experimental Dive Unit. Her final mission came in February 1990, when she was intentionally sunk to become an artificial reef.

Today, the Chippewa lies on her port side, offering a dramatic and expansive dive site shaped by time and tide. Her intact hull, cracked stern deck, and a massive fallen tower resting on the seabed create a broad area to explore, rich with hiding places and structure. Schools of Atlantic spadefish and tomtate grunts swirl around the wreck, while barracuda, jacks, and snapper patrol above. Steeped in history and alive with marine life, the Chippewa delivers a powerful wreck-diving experience that blends wartime legacy with thriving reef habitat.

