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THE HUNLEY NEWSLETTER

by George W. Penington - Editor

JANUARY 14 , 2005 ISSUE #54 Part 2 of 2

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["THE ROMANCE OF THE SUBMARINE"](#)

Still a third time was the David in trouble during her preliminary trials. On this occasion Lieutenant Paine, who had already had two marvelous escapes on her previous sinkings, got clear with three of his men, but the rest were drowned. Although the young officer appeared to bear a charmed life, he felt that the slogan “third time lucky” had been amply borne out, and he decided that the David was no longer the boat for him. He therefore, resigned his command, and a fresh skipper was appointed.

In view of her three disastrous experiments, it is amazing that a fourth crew could be found, but they were, and again she foundered; this time the whole of her occupants being drowned. No one knows exactly why this disaster took place, since there was no one to make any report upon it. One would have thought that the Confederates, having sore need of brave men, would have scrapped the David, and found some other employment for their sailors, instead, a fifth crew was recruited, and again the David sank and drowned them. Having lost so many men in training them to take the lives of others, the Navy Department decided that her next venture should be a case of win or lose altogether.

It came to the knowledge of the Confederate people that the enemy had recently put in service a very fine new corvette, the Housatonic. As luck would have it she was lying off the bar near Charleston Harbour; she seemed to offer a splendid object. Unwilling to risk further loss of life with this extremely unfortunate submarine the authorities cut down her crew to the minimum; in all, including her commander, there were but seven people aboard. It was as brave a thing as had ever been attempted in warfare; imagine the feelings of those volunteers; even during her exercises the David had drowned five crews, now she was on active service in which her capacity would be tested to the full. In addition it was winter, actually the 17th February, 1864.

It was known that the Federals were not wholly unaware of the projected attack, spies had been busy, and the whole of the Federal warships had received a special warning to sink, without inquiry, any craft which attempted to approach them. The Minister for the Navy had sent special instructions as to how an attack from submersible craft could be made. One thing the Navy Department over looked in their warnings; they had naturally considered that the ships which lay nearer the shore would be most likely to be attacked, and it was these who received the special instructions. The Confederates, on the other hand, determined that the outer vessels would be the better mark and it was amongst them that the Housatonic was lying. For this ship the little David made; it was indeed a case of the Biblical David and Goliath, but unlike the Bible story the Goliath becoming aware of its attacker, the small David was greatly perturbed. Strictly, the submarine would have been navigated with the hatches closed, but so fearful were the men of what might happen if she submerged, that they refused point blank to be fastened down in this fashion. The submarine, however, approached the Housatonic with her deck awash. She had been seen as she came to close quarters; the men on board the warship appeared to have been singularly alert, for in no time she was beaten to quarters and slipped her cables, going astern as she did so. Within two minutes, however, the David had let fly her spar torpedo, which was loaded with quite 100 lb, of powder. The captain of the Housatonic endeavored to bring his guns to bear on the attacker, but it was soon evident that she was at too close range for the guns to be depressed, and when they were fired, the shot went harmlessly

over the little David. Dixon, the commander of the David, had been able to choose what he considered the most vital spot in the warship's hull; he conjectured that the magazine would be just forward of the main-mast. It would appear that he judged to a nicety, for when the torpedo struck the hull of the doomed warship she rose on the crest of what seemed a very high wave, and then began to settle stern foremost in the water. It was a most thrilling moment, for here, for the first time in history probably, a submarine was securing her victim quite successfully, and a new chapter in naval warfare was being opened. There was now a scene of considerable panic aboard the Federal ship, for not only was the onslaught so unexpected, but the noise of the report, the trembling of the big ship, and its quick sinking, were all very unnerving. Even so, the sailors were prompt to man the boats, although only a few minutes elapsed between the striking of the torpedo and the sinking of the Housatonic. Practically the whole of her crew managed to leave the vessel in her boats, or else were picked up by boats from other ships.

In the Biblical encounter David returned victorious; here the submarine was lost with her antagonist and the whole of gallant crew went with her. They had been brave beyond belief, and they accomplished something which was then deemed, if not impossible, at least nearly so. The loss of both these vessels created an enormous stir both in the Federal; and the Confederate ranks; in the former there was some consternation; in the latter the jubilation was tinged with deep regret at the loss of seven gallant men: lost at a time when every man, particularly for the Navy, was badly needed. The Federal Government was so concerned at the result of this encounter that they offered a substantial reward for every submarine which could be sunk or captured; on the other hand, it would appear that the price paid by the submarine held back any further attempt on the part of the Confederates to add to their conquest. The Federal Navy Department was so impressed with the success of the David that they determined to counter it by building similar craft. But they also determined that their submarines should be able to retreat from action in whatever circumstances it should take place. On further consideration the experts admitted that the time was not ripe for a fully submersible craft, and they advocated, and subsequently got adopted, a scheme for the provision of three or more monitors. These might well be described as miniatures of the famous Monitor. She, it will be remembered, had her decks practically awash in all states of the weather; only her funnel and her turret offered any real mark to the enemy.

The new semi-submarines were quickly built, and it was the intention of the Navy Department that they should be used for the express purpose of blowing up Confederate ironclads. There is no record, however, of any real success being obtained by these strange craft. When at last this terrible struggle came to an end, the consensus of information in naval circles appeared to be that, although some progress had been made towards a submarine, the problem was still one which awaited a definite solution,. It was hopeless to build vessels for attacking enemy warships unless there was a reasonable prospect of them escaping after their work was done. Experiments had shown that the attacker was in an even more vulnerable position than the attacked. As the training for such craft was of a highly specialized nature, needing the best and clearest brains in any navy, it was obvious that to send such men to their death was robbing that navy of its greatest asset. Although experiments still went forward, the whole problem had to be faced afresh in view of the lessons learned in the gigantic struggle between the Federals and the Confederates.

Summed up, the problem had to be faced afresh in view of the lessons learned in the gigantic struggle between the Federals and the Confederates. Summed up, the trouble was still that a submarine could not be effective unless it had powerful propelling machinery. Where was this to be found? Steam was hopeless, save when a boat was awash; what could be done when she was submerged? Electricity was mentioned by many experts, and several inventors tried their hands at producing efficient motion, but, when all had been said for electricity, the fact remained that it was a most dangerous agent to employ on a submerging vessel. The batteries gave constant trouble, and the fumes given off from the acids employed were so dangerous to the men, that it was courting disaster to send them below with such a type of propelling machinery. Not yet had the petrol motor been discovered. Gas engines were at work, but again, gas aboard a submarine was as dangerous as could well be imagined, it would only be necessary for a pipe to leak between tank and engine, and the crew would be suffocated. This then was the position in the mid-'sixties of the last century, but still there were inventors who were determined to produce this most terrible weapon of warfare.

Jackson, George Gibbard. The romance of the submarine. Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott company, [1930]. 244 p.
Originally published: London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1930.

6) ON TO CHARLESTON

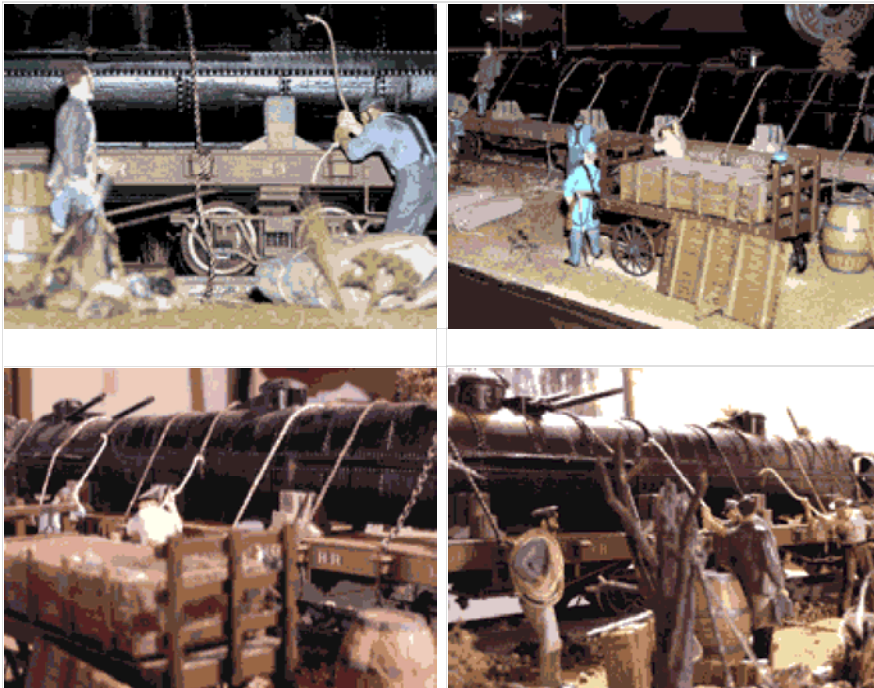
Sent: Thursday, December 30, 2004 4:58 PM
Subject: Hunley Model

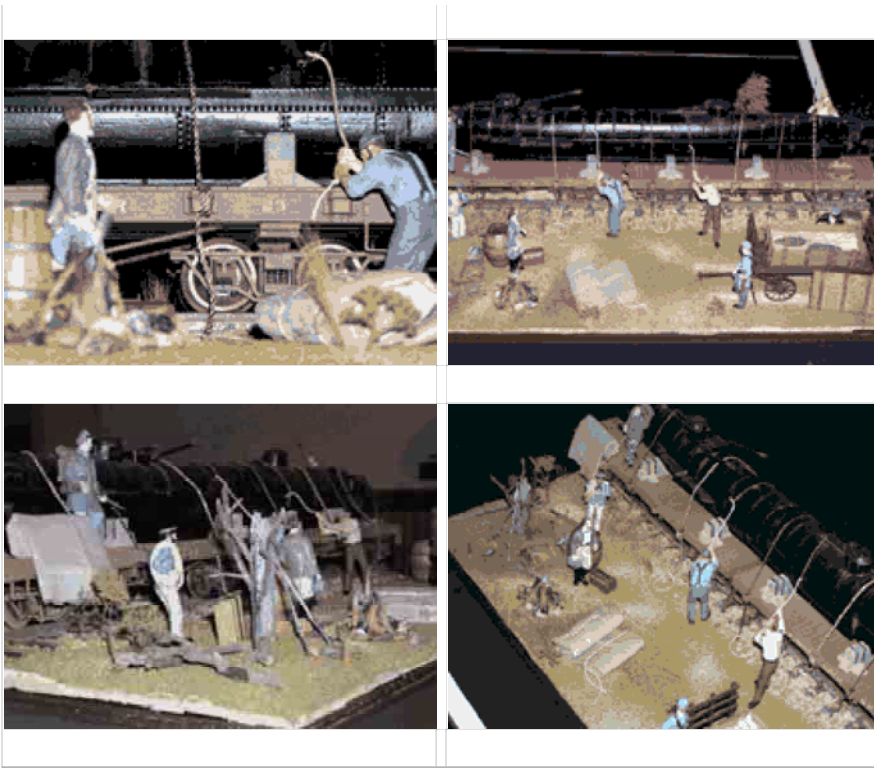
Last year I completed a scratch built Hunley, depicted as being shipped to Charleston, it is in 1/24 scale. Would you like photos? It was built with the help of Michael Crisafulli's plans etc. Your newsletters are great, I will be sure to subscribe, to keep them coming. Thank you, Dan Rumney

Thanks Dan...pictures would be great and thanks for the compliment. All the newsletters are time consuming, but...they are rewarding if only to keep abreast of Hunley Information. I am looking forward to another year of writing and producing them, I also working on a compilation of all the past newsletters in book form. Again thanks for the support and I am looking forward to the photo's. George W. Penington Webmaster and editor of the Hunley.com newsletter.

Dear George, Here are the pic's. They where taken w/o the display case to avoid glare etc. The scene is titled: 'On to Charleston' The project took over a year to build the most difficult task was to find soldiers in the proper scale, then repositioning of legs and arms etc. The inspiration for this can be credited to Mark Ragan's book which describes elements depicted.

I chose not to have the tarps yet draped over the Hunley so as to display the model better. The model is constructed of balsa, plastic and metal. The flat cars are g-scale that came undecorated, I decaled them to read Mobile and Ohio. William Blackmore is a friend that I e-mail from time to time and is a superb modeler. My work doesn't hold a candle to his. William's resin kits display great, but I can't persuade him to produce a Housatonic...which is not avail. in the model market. Must be no Yankee in him. All for now...Yours, Dan Rumney





7) HUNLEY MODEL ON EBAY

I have just put one of my models on EBAY...Here is the link if you would like to take a look:



[http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?](http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&rd=1&item=6505577483&ssPageName=STRK:MESE:IT)

[ViewItem&rd=1&item=6505577483&ssPageName=STRK:MESE:IT](http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&rd=1&item=6505577483&ssPageName=STRK:MESE:IT)



This model was built by George W. Penington Editor and webmaster of the Hunley.com Newsletter and website using William J. Blackmore's 1/72 scale resin kit, modified, completed and mounted on a piece of Charleston driftwood in a cyrillic plastic crystal clear display case with a section of his map "Charleston Harbor Civil War Battle Map" as a background showing all three of the actual sinking sites of this submarine. These models are numbered and this particular one is # 4/200. Each model and display is uniquely different and is worth collecting. Blackmore's model has amazing accuracy but is modified using theories that were discussed in our CSS H L Hunley Club by some of the greatest experts available. The spar arrangement is crafted based on logic and engineering required to keep the 135 lb. Torpedo aligned properly. The map in the background shows the actual sinking site of the Hunley and the Housatonic. The following is a brief history of the spar and the results of the confederate efforts.

The case is 13" x 5.5" x 5" (made in the USA with pride) The base is mirrored and the back has the appropriate section of my Charleston Harbor Civil War Battle map.

Some history: Attaching a torpedo to a spar on the bow of the Hunley was an innovation brought about by

Commander Dixon to solve the errors of towing a 90 pound free floating bomb behind his submarine. The idea was taken from the "David" built in Charleston who had successfully attacked the blockading Northern ship the "New Ironsides" outside Charleston Harbor and shaking her up from keel to lookout tower. In action the Hunley would propel itself manually using her "human horse power" to crank a propeller driven metal coffin toward an enemy vessel and then ram a harpoon like spike with 135 lbs. of dry gun powder into the side of any ship anchored within range. In theory the Hunley would then back away and allow the torpedo to come off the end of the spar. As she backed away to an estimated distance of 125 feet a line attached to a trigger on the torpedo on one end, and a spool on the other end would unwind. When the line was fully unwound the tension would trip the firing device and the bomb would explode.

On the evening of 17 February, 1864 the Hunley plowed out to sea in an iron tube in 58 degree water and attacked the U.S. Sloop of War U.S.S. Housatonic, one of the newest vessels to be stationed at the Charleston blockade. During the attack the cannons of the Housatonic could not be brought to bear down at the low angle in which the "fish boat" was first seen. Only small arms, muskets and shotguns from the deck watches were fired and bounced harmlessly off the bullet proof hull of the submarine. In a timed moment the 39.5 foot submarine tried to back away when an explosion and a great turbulence rose from the sea. The USS Housatonic sank within fifteen minutes and took five souls with her. The remaining crew, other than the one sailor who dived back below to get his wallet, survived by climbing into the rigging. Their only choice was to stay out of the water in the rigging and wait for rescue. Confederate Shore Patrols reported seeing a blue signal light after the attack, which was the pre-arranged signal for mission accomplished. However, the HUNLEY and her brave crew never returned from their mission. In 1970 Dr. E. Lee Spence located the wreck of the Hunley which remained in a state of remarkable preservation while he spent the next 25 years trying to convince authorities to help in resurrecting the wreck to no avail. On 9 August, 2000 the HUNLEY came to the surface and began the historic return home through the efforts of many Charlestonians and guest. Through their remarkable efforts many astounding secrets have been unveiled about the submarine, the most astounding of which may be that the Hunley was not just created from boiler parts that were lying about in a scrap pile, but actually designed and built from the ground up as an attack submarine, sleek in design and way advanced of anything invented to that day.

8) HUNLEY CLUB STILL LOOKING FOR ANSWERS TO THE "MYSTERY OF THE HUNLEY SINKING"

By George W. Pennington – Editor

1/12/05

As of today there are at least one hundred more mysteries that need to be resolved. On February 17, 1864 exactly one year before the end of the American Civil War a top secret submarine was launched into Charleston Harbor and became the first submarine to destroy an enemy ship. Ever since that day historians, scientist and civil war buffs have battled to solve the mystery and are hoping to have the answer this year.

Maria Jacobsen, senior archaeologist, has been working on the Confederate States Submarine H L Hunley since it was raised from the harbor silt in 2000. This remarkable piece of history was a virtual time capsule filled with artifacts and the remains of the eight brave crewman who navigated the nearly 40' "fish boat" to its final battle with the USS Housatonic.

Why did the Hunley sink? I have written a number of newsletters outlining theories the majority of which were presented, discussed and debated in the CSS H L Hunley Club. Theories range from the crew was severely injured during the sudden impact of the torpedo spar against the hull of the Housatonic, the sub was too close to the enemy ship when the explosion went off incapacitating half the crew or she was rammed or swamped by one of the northern blockading ships rushing to rescue the crew of the Housatonic. Some contribute it to Commander Dixon and possible human errors on his part.

Although club members have been hashing the various theories around for several years, they have been waiting patiently as pieces of evidence are released by the Friends of the Hunley, Inc. One member was quoted as saying that the FOTH has been overly stingy with information and facts until now. A recent ruling by the State Attorney General says that the group that is responsible for managing

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the restoration of the Hunley is definitely subject to the "Freedom of Information Act"

Glenn McConnell, chairman of the South Carolina Hunley Commission who the FOTH is responsible to has come up with his own theory. "My theory," said Glenn McConnell, "is the water did get rough and she took on some water and she was using more oxygen than she was bringing in through the snorkels and they blacked out."

It is interesting to note that Commander George Dixon, played by Armand Assante, in the movie "The Hunley" was explaining the operation of the sub to the final crew and stated that these were the snorkels designed to bring in fresh air, but the damn things never have worked.

Maria Jacobsen, who found Dixon's "gold piece" has always been forth coming as much as she is allowed too, and it is she who will help to decide the final answer to the mystery of the sinking if there is to be one. So far she has concluded based on her research and the input of fellow scientist and forensics that "Whatever happened appears to have happened quite quickly," she said. "They were collapsed more or less where they sat. You didn't see the guys trying to move toward the conning towers to exit. So either something happened very fast or they were not able to move." Her theory is that either the crew became unconscious from lack of oxygen, anoxia set in or the submarine flooded so rapidly that no one could move.

Jacobsen said, " Whatever caused the sinking, there was water in the submarine quite early on. What we found was that these fellows were drowned, the bodies floated, they decomposed and slowly sank."

She reports that over 3,000 items were removed from the interior and processed, photographed and mapped using 3-D laser technologies. She also stated that this may be the first time this method has been used with this type of archaeological project to create an image of the interior and exterior of the sub.

Most objects were turned over to a conservation team headed by Paul Mardikian, the senior conservator at the lab. Mardikian had just prior to the Hunley project worked on artifacts from the Titanic.

Club members are anxiously waiting for the examination of the hull. Ms. Jacobsen reports that "Every surface is covered with a corrosion product, the concretion. After that is removed and while the salt in the metal is removed to prevent disintegration we'll have to study the hull damage that is visible and determine how did it occur." In the mean time research is being conducted to the sediment found inside and lifted out in large cubes to determine how the submarine filled with silt and what articles may be hidden inside. It has been reported that over 900 x-rays have been taken and that the silt reduced the oxygen to help slow down 140 years of decomposition to the extent that brain tissue was found in the skulls of the crewmen and their bones even remained in their shoes.

Club members, over 300 of them composed of scientist, engineers, modelers, lurkers and buffs, are anxious to review the valves in the ballast tank pumping system which is more advanced than expected.

We know the pumps were used to control the water level in the ballast tanks, which with the forward motion and the dive planes enabled the submarine to rise or dive. But did the same system serve as a bilge pump to remove water from inside the submarine?

To study the sub and its artifacts, 900 X-ray photographs have been taken and stored in a computer. The X-rays revealed that because of the lack of oxygen to foster decomposition, the crewmen's brain tissue remained inside their skulls and their bones inside their shoes.

Membership in the CSS H L Hunley Club is free to all. The online address is <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/cssshlhunley> This group was formed for conversation and the exchange of information on the past and future history of the H.L.Hunley ,and the people who made it possible. We have over 370 pictures ,many links and always adding. Twenty one crew members died in the H.L.Hunley. This group is dedicated to those men.

9) EMAIL AND GUEST BOOK SELECTIONS

----- Original Message -----

From: "Jan Hensley" <janhensley@yahoo.com>

To: <george@thehunley.com>

Sent: Tuesday, December 28, 2004 9:19 AM

George.

First of all many thanks for the fine work you do. I'm signing up for the newsletter very soon. I have a question. Back in October my wife and I were over at Magnolia cemetery looking for the graves of the Hunley crew. Finally we found them and were delighted to find a fellow that gave us a lot of information. He said he and his two twin brother were contracted for some rebar to build the tomb of the crew buried in April. He got excited about working on the grave and volunteered his time. He took sixty five rolls of film of the grave and the ceremony of burying the crew. I'm writing a little article and would like to contact him. Do you know who I am talking about and can you give me an email or address so I can write him? Jan G. Hensley

Hello Jan.

Thanks for writing and the great support. To answer your question, I am not sure who the person is that you are looking for, but I will ask around. Also with your permission I will post this mail in the next newsletter and hopefully this person is a subscriber or someone will know who it is. In the meantime you may want to call Magnolia Cemetery Trust at 843-722-8638. They are very friendly people and are willing to help in any way they can. If they don't know they can point you in the right direction. I interviewed them once for a newsletter, trying to find out who's body was who's and the proper location of each casket. They were pretty much left in the dark about those details. I am also trying to find out when the burial site will be completed with the headstones in place. It seems like the ball was dropped after the burial services. I will pursue this again and let you know what I find out. I would also be interested in publishing your article in one of the newsletters next year. Thanks again for writing.
George W. Penington Webmaster and Editor of the Hunley.com newsletter and website.

----- Original Message -----

To: <mistergwp@thehunley.com>

Sent: Monday, December 27, 2004 12:15 PM

Subject: Hello

I am interested in obtaining/purchasing a DVD (or VHS) of the funeral ceremonies from last April. My son attended the services with his fiancée, and though they did their own home movie of what they could see, I would be interested in a professional copy. If your organization does not have one available, could you please point me in the direction of an organization or person who might be able to help me? Thank you so much for your help. I also have really enjoyed your newsletter for the past year. Good luck with it in the future.

Joyce B.
Roanoke, VA

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths you take, but by the number of moments that take your breath away".

Hello Joyce:

This is the best record of the Hunley Burial around. <http://www.getadub.com/hunley.html> but ps. Thanks, George W. Penington Webmaster and Editor of the Hunley.com newsletter.

++++++

Thank you so much, I shall try there.

I think you are doing good work with your site and newsletter, and I hope you continue to do so...It is really fascinating to track the history of it all.

In college, US history was my minor, and if I had not been so in love with my nursing degree, my second career choice was to teach history... I did the costuming for my son and his fiancée for the ceremonies last April, and hated that I could not attend myself, for health reasons...

Thanks again for your quick and helpful response, and I look forward to seeing the restored Hunley someday.

Joyce B

realname: Aad van Dijk (Mr.)
username: adrian@caiw.nl
city: Wateringen state: Z-H country: Netherlands
Date: Tuesday January 11, 2005

comments

I am an avid reader of all kinds of literature pertaining to the Civil War. The unforgettable story of the Hunley is one of the great tales of this unbelievably complex conflict which has captured a lot of my attention lately. I also saw the raising of the Hunley on television which I found to be quite moving, since the mortal remains of these brave warriors could finally be lifted from the ocean floor and laid to rest in their beloved soil which they defended until their last breath.

realname: J. R. Eder
username: jrederjr@cs.com
city: Manning state: SC. country: USA
Date: Thursday December 23, 2004

comments

I have followed the raising and subsequent study of the Hunley with great interest. I have a very strong interest in the Civil War. I think the Hunley is one of the great historical treasures of our time. I have yet to visit the Hunley but plan on doing so soon. My Car license plate is H. L. 1151

realname: Walt Mathers
username: scard@bcpl.net
city: Annapolis state: MD
country: USA
Date: Tuesday January 11, 2005

comments

Gentlemen: After viewing your page describing the signal lanterns and hearing you bemoan the fact that there are few mentions of such lamps and their usage I thought it only proper to alert you to the Signal Corps Association's web site and forum at: <http://www.civilwarsignals.org/> and invite you to post up with us til your heart is content. You will find information and ask as many questions at will. We also have a discussion chat room slated for every Wednesday night at 7 pm EST. Both the forum and chat room is open to all and you don't have to register either. Our topics include both naval and military communication principles and methods and we have an archive full of documentation. Hope to see you there! Walt

----- Original Message -----

From: "pcjjordan" <pcjjordan@foggy.net>

To: <mistergwp@thehunley.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 08, 2005 11:38 PM
Subject: Angus Smith...diver
Hi,

I believe that the Angus Smith said to be the partner of David Broadfoot, who had the job of recovering the Hunley, not once but twice, is my 3xs maternal g. grandfather. I know enough about him to say for certain that he lived in Charleston, SC, and was a deep-sea diver, by profession, among other things. This was not a common profession at all. My Angus Smith was born c. 1827, in Scotland, and married Adeline Lawrence, in Charleston, c. 1850. My g. grandfather, Capt. John Gray Smith, grandson of Angus, was also a deep-sea diver.

Since his name is mentioned in the article provided at this site, is there a way I can find out more...where did this info on Smith and Broadfoot come from? I would like to prove that this is my ancestor, by comparing the information I have in my files, to whatever this article was drawn from. It would make my research much easier, if I could learn whether or not the information was collected from local newspaper articles. Then, I could seek out those articles myself and make copies for my files. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Patricia Jordan
774 Dorothy Ct.
Arcata, CA 95521

realname: Michael Frost
username: scmmsf@hotmail.com
city: Cardiff
state:
country: UK - EU
Date: Wednesday January 05, 2005

comments

Excellent site. Evidence from the Hunley wreck demonstrates that many of the crew were recent European immigrants. This confounds an existing historical assumption that new immigrants were almost only able to give their loyalty to the Federacy and that only persons with personal history of slavery and affection for it could fight for it and that this is central to the confederacy's failure to attract European arms into its ranks. To be told that the crew was largely European and substantially Irish comes as a serious shock. Why would a European have affection for slavery? Were the immigrants offered land to serve for the confederacy or perhaps just for this special task? One last point. I'm not trying to dwell on trivia but the Irish sailors were buried in the Episcopalian church. Do we know if they were Episcopalianians?

realname: Cdr Tim Roberts RN(Rtd)
username: trobgos@aol.com
city: Grange-over-Sands
state: Cumbria country: UK
Date: Friday December 31, 2004
comments

A really fascinating website dedicated to the first submarine to sink enemy shipping. Thanks for letting me share such an interesting story.

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[Remove yourself from future email here](#) or reply to this message with the word 'remove' in your email message subject line or send E-Mail to Mistergwp@thehunley.com with the subject "unsubscribe"
