

THE CSS HUNLEY  
By Primus Ancient Roger Miner VII<sup>o</sup>  
presented January 27, 2005

Charleston, South Carolina, is known as the "Holy City" since its skyline largely consists of a multitude of church steeples. Charleston is also called the "Historical City" because of the numerous historical events that have occurred there before, during and after the Revolutionary War. While driving along the Battery of Charleston Harbor, you will observe the numerous cannons installed along the edge of White Point Gardens. These cannons are remnants of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. From this same Battery, the first shots of the Civil War were fired on Fort Sumter by Citadel Cadets in an attempt to remove the Union soldiers stationed there.

One of the major historical events that occurred in Charleston happened in February 17, 1864, when the Confederate submarine, *H. L. Hunley*, commanded by Lt. George E. Dixon, sank the Union blockader, *Housatonic*, an accomplishment way ahead of that day and time. This was the third crew to make an attempt to sail a "torpedo" that operated underwater. The first crew sank the sub at the dock, and five of the eight crewmen drowned. Next, Horace Hunley accidentally sank the sub in the middle of the harbor, killing himself and seven others. Bro. Hunley was a Master Mason, who served as Secretary of Mt. Moriah Lodge #59 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Other Masons involved were: James R. McClintock (Mobile, Ala., #40), William Alexander (Mobile, Ala., #40), John R. Fretwell (Lavaca Lodge #36, Lavaca, Texas, and Grand Master of Texas, 1868), and Edgar Singer (Lavaca Lodge #36).

These setbacks and frustrations nearly consumed Lt. Dixon. The Confederates wanted action, not excuses. His mission was to sink an enemy warship by means of a tiny iron boat that sailed beneath the waves. It didn't matter that such a feat had never been done before. Dixon was desperately trying to keep the strange "fish-boat" from claiming a third crew. The Confederacy needed a victory, and a lot of people hoped to get it from this little privateer torpedo boat, this submarine, the *H. L. Hunley*.

William Alexander, a machinist, designed some of the Confederacy's deadly guns. But in late 1862, Dixon's friend was working on a less conventional project. His machine shop, Park and Lyons, was helping a group of entrepreneurs build a torpedo boat that would operate underwater. James McClintock was the designer/engineer.

While some folks laughed at the notion, Dixon was taken with the idea. The way the boat worked was deceptively simple. It carried a crew of five, four men to power the propeller with hand-cranks, and a fifth to steer. Ballast tanks took on and expelled water to control the level at which the sub sailed. The boat, called the American Diver, went through months of delays before it was launched in the winter of 1863. It was lost while under tow near the mouth of Mobile Bay. After finding new investors, the designers and engineers went back to the drawing board. The new submarine benefited from two years of trial and error. It was 40 feet long, carried a crew of eight, dove underwater, and resurfaced gracefully. The need for this secret weapon was more needed in Charleston than in Mobile, so it was secreted by rail across the South.

Lt. Dixon and William Alexander, the sub's designer, persuaded Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard, the sub's owner, to give the "fish-boat" another chance. They had divers salvage it from the Cooper River channel. Together, the two men refurbished the sub in Mount Pleasant. Dixon raised a crew, taking most of the men from the *CSS Indian Chief*. He felt that he had the right crew and



the right boat. After many practice sailings, Dixon was waiting for the right weather conditions. On February 17, 1864, The *H. L. Hunley* finally sailed on its final voyage. The Housatonic was sunk, but unfortunately the *Hunley* never surfaced and took Dixon and the crew to their deaths.

Since records of the submarine and its crew were never kept, no official duty or pay records were found. The Confederate Navy was unclear as to who the crewmembers were or even the number of crewmembers on board. The *H. L. Hunley* became a mystery, one, which lingered for 140 years in the ocean off the coast of South Carolina. The submarine was finally located in 1995. On August 8, 2000, the vessel was raised from its watery grave with a great deal of fanfare and was placed on a barge and taken up the Cooper River to the old Naval Base. Crowds of people lined the shore to watch the sub go by, and many boats accompanied it up the river. Much of what is known about the crew of the *Hunley* comes from forensic and genealogical science and historical research accomplished on the interior of the submarine since it was raised from the ocean.

The *Hunley* was placed at the Warren Lasch Conservation Lab in North Charleston, and over the next few years was partially disassembled by removing hull plates and carefully removing the debris within the hull, spoonful by spoonful, until the bones of the crewmen and articles of personal belongings were found. Tours of the *Hunley* will be available at the Conservation Lab at \$10 per visitor.

Now came time to bid farewell to the third and final crew of the *H. L. Hunley*. On Saturday, April 17, 2004, which began as a rather warm day, Civil War re-enactors prepared for full military honors for the final eight sailors from the Confederate submarine *H. L. Hunley*. The entire Grand Lodge lines from Alabama and South Carolina were present at the funeral. The Grand Lodge officers of Alabama opened Mobile Lodge #40 (now known as McCormick-Mobile #40) at a breakfast meeting on the day of the funeral. Bro. Randy Burbage, the leader of Charleston's re-enactors, a member of the state Hunley Commission, and also Chairman of the *Hunley* Funeral Committee, delivered part of the eulogy for the eight sailors at the Battery in White Point Garden. Afterwards, the march began down East Bay Street to Magnolia Cemetery to the sailor's final resting-place, a distance of four miles. The Masonic procession had about 50 Masons, and hundreds of other Masons were present at the cemetery, where they participated in the "Funeral Grand Honors" (an innovation made to the 1843 funeral service). Many re-enactors wore woolen uniforms, which made it very difficult to march that distance in the heat. The eight bodies were placed on horse-drawn caissons. Besides the uniformed re-enactors, the procession included the Scottish American Military Bagpipers, The Cabell-Breckinridge Brass Band from Virginia Military Academy, and a multitude of Masonic Brothers all decked out in tuxedos, aprons, and collars. Women re-enactors were also in the march dressed in black long dresses, depicting bereaved widows. The streets were lined with crowds of people observing this historical event. The entire event from the eulogy at the Battery, the procession, and the funeral service was displayed on television.

The procession arrived at Magnolia Cemetery where music was played by the 5th Alabama Band, the 8th Georgia Band, and the Citadel Bagpipers. Approximately 50,000 spectators and re-enactors gathered at the cemetery to witness the funeral ceremony.



After prayers by the attending clergy, Senator Glenn F. McConnell, Chairman of the *Hunley* Commission, gave the following speech:

WE ARE HERE TODAY TO HONOR EIGHT MEN WHOSE LIVES AND DEATHS HAVE CREATED AN AMAZING LEGACY. IT IS A LEGACY THAT WILL SERVE TO INSPIRE THE WORLD FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

THE LEGACY BEGAN ON FEBRUARY 17, 1864. ON A COLD WINTER'S NIGHT, THESE EIGHT MEN TOOK THE FIRST STEPS FROM THEIR LODGINGS TO BATTERY MARSHALL ON SULLIVAN'S ISLAND TO THE PLACE WHERE THE *H. L. HUNLEY* WAS DOCKED, AWAITING THEIR ARRIVAL.

THE STEPS THEY TOOK ALONG THAT PATH CONTINUE TO ECHO DOWN THE CORRIDORS OF TIME. THEIR STEPS LAUNCHED A JOURNEY WE CONTINUE TODAY. AS THEY WALKED THE SHORT DISTANCE TO THE SEA, BEFORE THE SUN WOULD RISE AGAIN, THESE EIGHT MEN WOULD CHANGE THE WORLD.

THE POET HENRY LONGFELLOW WROTE A PASSAGE THAT CARRIES SPECIAL MEANING FOR US. HE WROTE:

*"LIVES OF GREAT MEN REMIND US  
WE CAN MAKE OUR LIVES SUBLIME  
AND DEPARTING LEAVE BEHIND US  
FOOTPRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME;  
FOOTPRINTS, THAT PERHAPS ANOTHER  
SAILING O'ER LIFE'S SOLEMN MAIN,  
A FORLORN AND SHIPWRECKED BROTHER,  
SEEING, SHALL TAKE HEART AGAIN."*

THE CREW-MEMBERS WHO WALKED TOWARD THEIR DESTINY THAT NIGHT WERE YOUNG MEN IN THE PRIME OF LIFE, A BAND OF BROTHERS, FILLED WITH HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

WE CAN ONLY WONDER WHAT THOUGHTS FILLED THEIR MINDS. MOST PROBABLY, THEY WERE THINKING OF THEIR FAMILIES--THEIR HEARTS FILLED WITH LOVE FOR THEIR LOVED ONES AND THE HOMES THEY DREAMED OF RETURNING TO AT WAR'S END.

AS THEY WALKED THROUGH THE NIGHT, THEY MUST HAVE GLANCED AT EACH OTHER. THEY MUST HAVE STUDIED THE FACES, THE EXPRESSIONS, THE BEARING, OF THEIR COMRADES. TO ALL APPEARANCES, THESE WERE NORMAL MEN READY TO PERFORM A TASK.

THEY HAD TO KNOW THE STAKES WERE HIGH. THEY HAD TO KNOW THAT THE RISK THEY WERE TAKING WAS EXTREME. BUT THEY PROBABLY DID NOT IMAGINE THAT THE FOOTPRINTS THEY WERE MAKING ALONG THAT PATH THAT NIGHT WOULD LEAVE SUCH A LARGE AND PERMANENT IMPRINT ON THE SANDS OF TIME.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY YEARS AGO, THIS CITY WAS IN SHOCK. CHARLESTON WAS UNDER SIEGE, ISOLATED BY MILITARY BLOCKADES, CONSTANTLY ROCKED BY ENEMY FIRE. THE MISERY, THE SUFFERING, AND THE FEAR THAT GRIPPED THE CITY WERE PALPABLE.

NOT ONE OF THESE EIGHT MEN CAME FROM THIS CITY. IN FACT, NONE OF THEM WERE FROM SOUTH CAROLINA. MOST WERE NOT NATIVE SOUTHERNERS. HALF WERE NOT EVEN BORN IN



AMERICA. AND YET, THESE MEN VOLUNTEERED TO BOARD AN EXPERIMENTAL AND DANGEROUS CRAFT TO SAVE THIS CITY FROM DESTRUCTION. THEY BEGAN A JOURNEY INTO THE DARKNESS IN ORDER TO GIVE LIGHT TO THOSE THEY LEFT BEHIND.

BY TODAY'S STANDARDS, THE EIGHT MEN OF THE *HUNLEY* WERE MOSTLY SLIGHT IN BUILD. AND YET THEY CARRIED THE WEIGHT OF THIS CITY ON THEIR SHOULDERS AS THEY LAUNCHED A DESPERATE EFFORT TO DEFEND THE PEOPLE OF CHARLESTON. CONFIDENCE, BRAVERY, AND FAITH LET THEM ON CRANK BY CRANK ON WHAT WOULD BE MORE THAN THEY KNEW--THE LONG JOURNEY HOME. THEIR MORTAL REMAINS WOULD DISAPPEAR INTO THE DARKNESS AND FOR 136 YEARS, THEIR CORPSES WOULD REST SILENTLY IN A WATERY GRAVE BENEATH THE OCEAN'S FOAM.

THEN ON AUGUST 8, 2000, AT APPROXIMATELY 8:35 AM, 136 YEARS AFTER THEY BEGAN THEIR MISSION THEY WOULD LIFT OFF THE BOTTOM OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, STILL IN THEIR DUTY STATIONS, AND BEGIN AGAIN THE LONG JOURNEY HOME. FOR THE WORLD AND FOR THEM, THE LONG WAIT WAS OVER. AS THEY APPROACHED THE GROUND THEY SOUGHT TO DEFEND, THOSE WHO KNEW THEM IN PERSON WERE GONE, BUT THOSE WHO KNEW THEM IN SPIRIT WERE WAITING. THE EMPTY DAYS OF WAIT HAD PASSED TO A CROWDED DAY OF HOMECOMING AND APPRECIATION. WHAT WAS ONCE A MILITARY SECRET HAD BECOME A HISTORICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL WONDER. IN THE CREW'S LOSS, THERE WAS NOW THIS GREAT GAIN.

TODAY, WE REPAY THAT DEBT OF THEIR CARRYING THE BURDENS OF OUR CITY ON THEIR SHOULDERS BY CARRYING EACH OF THEM ON OURS. UNTIL THIS TIME, 140 YEARS AFTER THEIR SACRIFICE, THESE MEN WERE MOSTLY ANONYMOUS TO US. WE KNEW A FEW OF THEIR NAMES BUT NONE OF THEIR FACES. THE FACTS OF THEIR LIVES WERE SHROUDED IN MYSTERY.

TODAY, AT THIS PLACE AND AT THIS TIME, WE CAN MEET THEM. WE CAN SAY HELLO EVEN AS WE SAY GOODBYE.

FIRST THERE WAS THE COMMANDER, GEORGE DIXON.

AS HE WALKED ALONG THE PATH TO BREACH INLET THAT NIGHT, HIS THOUGHTS PROBABLY FOCUSED ON HIS DUTIES. THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE MISSION WAS IN HIS CHARGE. BUT HE PROBABLY ALSO WONDERED WHAT HIS LOVE, QUEENIE BENNETT, WAS DOING THAT NIGHT. CHANCES ARE THAT HE HOPED THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS MISSION MIGHT MEAN HE WOULD SEE HER AGAIN SOON. HE PROBABLY HOPED SHE WAS PRAYING FOR HIM AND THAT SHE WOULD NOT WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT HIS SAFETY.

OF ONE THING WE CAN BE CERTAIN: HE WAS CHECKING HIS LEFT POCKET, TENDERLY CARESSING THE 20 DOLLAR GOLD PIECE HE ALWAYS KEPT THERE. IT WAS HIS LIFE PRESERVER, THE GIFT SHE HAD GIVEN HIM FOR GOOD LUCK. HE DERIVED COMFORT FROM THE HOPE THAT THE COIN WOULD HELP HIM THROUGH THE NEXT FEW HOURS, PROTECTING HIM FROM HARM, JUST AS IT HAD AT THE BATTLE OF SHILOH. GEORGE DIXON KNEW HE HAD ASSEMBLED AN EXTRAORDINARY CREW, A CREW HE DESCRIBED IN A LETTER AS THE BEST HE HAD EVER SEEN.

WALKING WITH HIM THAT NIGHT WAS JOSEPH RIDGAWAY, THE SECOND IN COMMAND. JOSEPH WAS A 28-YEAR-OLD NATIVE OF MARYLAND WITH MUCH EXPERIENCE ON SHIPS.



WALKING CLOSE BY, DIXON COULD SEE JAMES WICKS, A TRUE VETERAN OF NAVAL CONFLICTS. WICKS HAD SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY FOR 20 YEARS BEFORE JOINING THE CONFEDERACY.

RIDGAWAY AND WICKS, BOTH 5' 10" TALL, WERE ALSO BOTH EXPERIENCED AT SEA. THEY COULD BE COUNTED ON TO HANDLE THE REAR BALLAST TANK VALVE, THE PUMP, AND THE FLYWHEEL BRAKE, ALL CRITICAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE MISSION AT HAND. AS THE CREW WALKED THROUGH THE NIGHT, DIXON COULD ALSO SEE ARNOLD BECKER, A 19-YEAR OLD SEAMAN, THE YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE TEAM. BORN IN GERMANY, STILL SPEAKING WITH A THICK ACCENT, BECKER HAD WORKED AS A RIVERBOAT SAILOR AND SERVED ON A NUMBER OF BOATS, INCLUDING THE INDIAN CHIEF. AT 5' 5 1/2", BECKER COULD EASILY SLIP INTO THE OPERATION OF THE BELLOWS TO BRING FRESH AIR INTO THE UNDERWATER CRAFT SOON TO BE KNOWN AS THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL SUBMARINE IN THE WORLD.

WALKING WITH BECKER WAS ANOTHER EUROPEAN, A SAILOR NAMED C. SIMPKINS, WHO HAD ALSO SERVED ON THE INDIAN CHIEF. AT 44 YEARS OF AGE, STANDING 5' 10", SIMPKINS COULD BE COUNTED ON TO HELP KEEP THE POWER IN THE CRANK.

DIXON, RIDGAWAY, WICKS, BECKER, AND SIMPKINS WERE JOINED THAT NIGHT BY THREE OTHERS. ONE WAS FRANK COLLINS, A 23-YEAR-OLD SEAMAN WHO STOOD A FULL SIX FEET TALL. CONFIDENT AND POWERFUL, COLLINS HAD ALSO SERVED ON THE INDIAN CHIEF.

THE FINAL TWO MEN WHO WALKED DOWN THE PATH TO THE SEA WERE CORPORAL CARLSON AND PRIVATE MILLER. CARLSON HAD A BACKGROUND IN THE GERMAN LIGHT ARTILLERY. MILLER WAS AN INFANTRYMAN. BOTH WERE TOUGH AND WELL-PREPARED TO TURN THE CRANKS THAT WOULD POWER THE *HUNLEY* ON ITS SECRET JOURNEY.

WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT BREACH INLET THAT NIGHT, ALL EIGHT CLIMBED INTO THE BELLY OF THE *HUNLEY*, MANNED THEIR STATIONS AND SLIPPED AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE SEA. WE KNOW THEY KEPT THEIR APPOINTMENT WITH HISTORY THAT NIGHT. WE KNOW THAT THE COURAGE AND THE HEROISM THEY BROUGHT TO THEIR MISSION ROSE TO THE LEVEL OF LEGEND. BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY ACHIEVED THAT NIGHT MARITIME HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY MANKIND USES TO CONQUER THE SEA CHANGED ON OUR PLANET FOR ALL TIME.

BUT THE WORLD HAS NEVER BEEN GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO HONOR THESE MEN UNTIL TODAY. AND IT IS FOR THAT PURPOSE THAT SO MANY AMERICANS, AND SO MANY PEOPLE FROM AROUND THE WORLD, HAVE GATHERED HERE TODAY FOR THIS SOLEMN OCCASION. BY INEXPLICABLY FAILING TO RETURN HOME, WE ARE REMINDED OF THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF LIFE AND OUR OWN MORTALITY. IN THE SOLEMN REMEMBRANCE OF THEM, WE ARE REMINDED OF THE POSSIBILITIES THAT EXIST BECAUSE OF OUR COMMUNION WITH GOD.

A WISE PRIEST ONCE SAID THAT THE BEST HOMILY THAT COULD EVER BE PREACHED IS WRITTEN BY A LIFE WELL-LIVED. THAT IS THE LIVES OF THE CREW OF THE *HUNLEY*:

*WHO SAW DUTY AND DID IT,  
WHO SAW DANGER AND CONFRONTED IT,  
WHO SAW TRUTH AND FOLLOWED IT,  
WHO SAW NEED AND SATISFIED IT,  
WHO SAW HOME AND DEFENDED IT,  
WHO SAW FAITH AND FOLLOWED IT.*



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THESE WERE MEN, BY THE JOURNEY OF THEIR LIVES AND THEIR ADHERENCE TO FAITH, POINTED US IN THE DIRECTION OF GREATNESS.

THEY HAVE TAUGHT US THAT LIFE IS A PRECIOUS GIFT FROM GOD THAT WE SHOULD CHERISH EACH DAY. THEY HAVE REMINDED US THAT DEATH IS BUT A GATEWAY TO LIFE EVERLASTING FOR THOSE WHOSE FAITH IS STRONG. AND THEY HAVE ILLUSTRATED, HEROICALLY, FOR ALL TIME, WHAT THE GOSPELS TEACH US, "THAT GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS, THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS."

AS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH, I BELIEVE THE EIGHT MEN OF THE HUNLEY ARE WATCHING OVER US TODAY. WITH THE HELP OF GOD, WHO IS THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THEY HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO US, AND FROM THE OLD THERE IS THE NEW.

WHEN WE LIFTED THE *HUNLEY* FROM THE SEA, WHEN WE BROUGHT HER LOVINGLY BACK TO THIS CITY, AND EVEN AS WE CONTINUE TO TELL HER STORY AND TO PRESERVE HER DIGNITY FOR ALL TIME, I BELIEVE THE SPIRIT OF THESE EIGHT MEN HAS BEEN WITH US AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE WITH US. IN THESE MOMENTS, WE ARE UPLIFTED BY THE ETERNAL TRUTH THAT THE SPIRIT IS GREATER THAN THE FLESH AND IN DEATH THERE IS LIFE.

TODAY, WE CONTEMPLATE THE STEPS THEY TOOK 140 YEARS AGO--THE STEPS THAT LED THEM FROM THE SAFETY OF THEIR LODGINGS TO THEIR INCREDIBLE SACRIFICE AND ULTIMATELY TO THEIR APPOINTMENT WITH DESTINY. WE ARE TOGETHER WITH THEM ON THE LAST LEG OF THE JOURNEY HOME, SHARING THE MEMORIES OF THEIR LOSS AND SHARING THEIR SUCCESS. IN GOD'S GRACE, FOR THEM AND FOR US, IT IS NOT THE END BUT THE BEGINNING. WE TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR BRAVERY, AND WE MARVEL AT THEIR INVENTIVENESS. WE SEE THEIR IMAGES AND SENSE IN OUR MEMORIES THEIR CLOSENESS, EVEN THOUGH TIME HAS PROVIDED US GREAT DISTANCE. AND LIKE OLD FRIENDS, WE GRIEVE AT THEIR DEATHS.

THOSE QUIET FOOTSTEPS, TAKEN SO LONG AGO ON FEBRUARY 17, 1864, ARE NOW HONORED AND MAGNIFIED ON THIS OCCASION BY THE THANKFUL THUNDER OF THE THOUSANDS OF NEW FOOTSTEPS, OF MEN AND WOMEN FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, WHO HAVE COME TO THIS PLACE TO HONOR THESE EIGHT EXTRAORDINARY PIONEERS.

WE ARE REMINDED IN THE GOSPEL THAT ON THE FIRST EASTER AN ANGEL SPOKE TO MARY AND SAID, "WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING AMONGST THE DEAD?" WE NEED TO HEED THAT REMINDER. THEY ARE NOT HERE IN THOSE COFFINS. THEY HAVE GONE AHEAD. THUS, LET THEM BE OUR COMPASS, NOT OUR SORROW, FOR THEY POINT US TO IMMORTALITY. OUR EMOTIONS THUS BECOME ONES OF APPRECIATION, NOT SADNESS.

WELCOME HOME. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COURAGE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ACCHEIVEMENT. YOUR JOURNEY IS NOW COMPLETE. YOU KNOW ALL THAT YOU LOST AND ALL THAT YOU WON. YOUR LASTING LEGACY BECOMES A REMINDER THAT FREEDOM DID NOT COME EASY FOR ANY GENERATION OF AMERICANS AND THAT FOR FREEDOM TO ENDURE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME, FAITH AND COURAGE LIKE THAT EXHIBITED BY THE MEN OF THE *HUNLEY* MUST BE MADE TIME AND AGAIN UNTIL THE END OF TIME. AND THOSE OF US STILL LIVING MAKE THIS SOLEMN PLEDGE: FOR SO LONG AS WE LIVE, WE SHALL NOT FORGET YOU, AND WE WILL LET YOUR LEGACY INSPIRE US TO DO SUCH GREAT WORKS THAT WE ALSO MAY HEAR FROM THE SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE HUNLEY ON OUR LAST DAY, "WELL DONE."



SO, TO LT. GEORGE E. DIXON AND SEAMAN ARNOLD BECKER, QUARTERMASTER C. SIMPKINS, SEAMAN FRANK G. COLLINS, CORPORAL J. F. CARLSON, PRIVATE J. MILLER, BOATSWAIN MATE JAMES A WICKS, AND QUARTERMASTER JOSEPH RIDGAWAY, GOODBYE UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.

GOD BLESS YOUR SOULS. GOD BLESS US ALL. AND GOD BLESS AMERICA.

Following Senator McConnell's speech, a Masonic funeral was held for Lt. George E. Dixon since he was a Freemason and a member of Mobile Lodge No. 40, of Mobile, Alabama. After a brief introduction by MWB Jack A. Marler, 33°, Grand Master of Ancient Freemasons in South Carolina, W. Bro. Wayne E. Sirmon, 33°, Valley of Mobile, Ala.; Chairman, Masonic Education Committee, Grand Lodge of Alabama; and Past Master of McCormick-Mobile Lodge No. 40, performed the Masonic funeral service which was published by the Baltimore Masonic Convention of 1843. There were six brothers representing the Civil War Lodge of Research, No. 1865, AF & AM, members of the South Carolina Masonic Research Society, Masons from Alabama, South Carolina and a few others in attendance. Masonry received great exposure before the thousand attendees and the thousands who viewed the ceremony on television.

It was noted that Bro. Dixon received the Entered Apprentice Degree on April 20, 1863, passed to the Fellowcraft Degree on April 27, 1863, and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on May 4, 1863. He was also a Royal Arch Mason.

Following the Masonic funeral service, the procession was held to carry the eight caskets to the burial plot for the Internment Rites. All eight caskets were placed in a common grave. After 140 years, the members of the third crew of the *Hunley* were put in their final resting-place. The funeral ceremony concluded as the notes of "Taps" drifted across the cemetery grounds, thus concluding the long history of the *H. L. Hunley*.

Note: Some of the historical facts are from the *Charleston Post and Courier*, Sunday, April 11, 2004.

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-- U.S. NAVY SHIPS --

USS *Housatonic* (1862-1864)

USS *Housatonic*, a 1930-ton *Ossipee* class steam screw sloop of war, was built at the Boston Navy Yard, Massachusetts. Commissioned in August 1862, she arrived off Charleston, South Carolina, the following month to join United States' Navy forces blockading that Confederate seaport. During the next seventeen months, she played an active role, capturing or helping to capture several blockade runners, providing support for attacks on fortifications and otherwise assisting in operations against the Confederacy. On 17 February 1864, while anchored off Charleston, *Housatonic* was attacked by the submarine [H.L. Hunley](#), gaining the unwanted distinction of becoming the first warship to be sunk by a submarine.



Photo # NH 999 Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley. Artwork by R.G. Skerrett

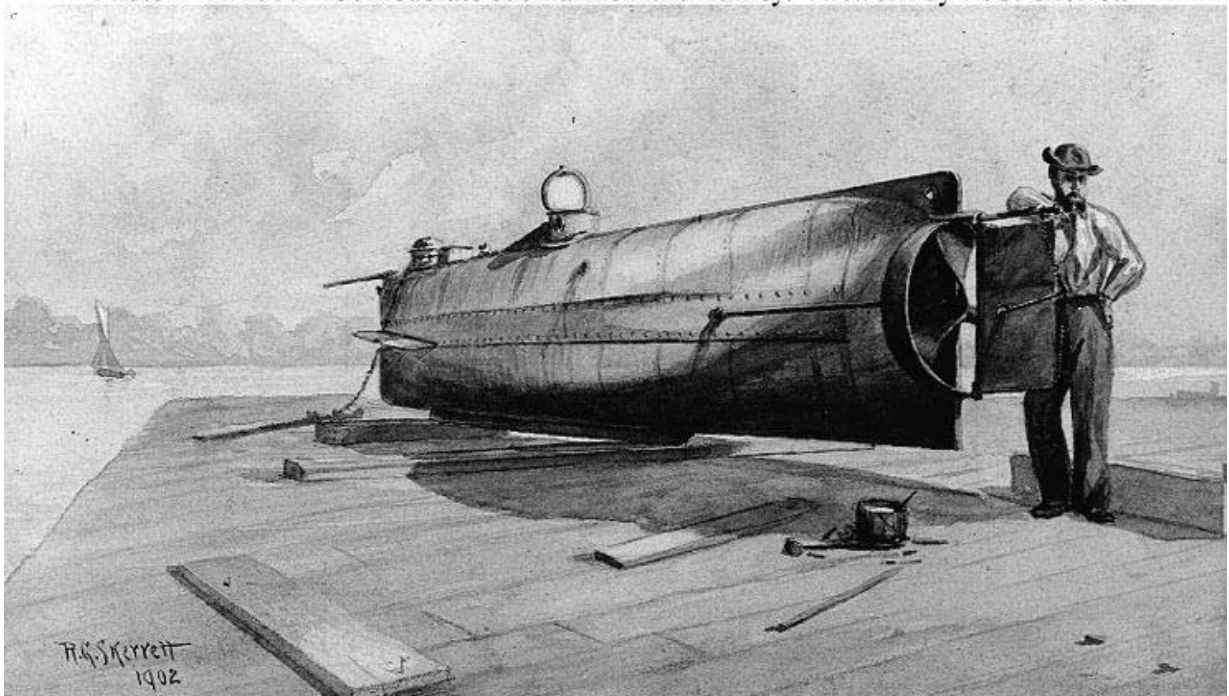


Photo # NH 53573 USS Housatonic. Artwork by R.G. Skerrett

