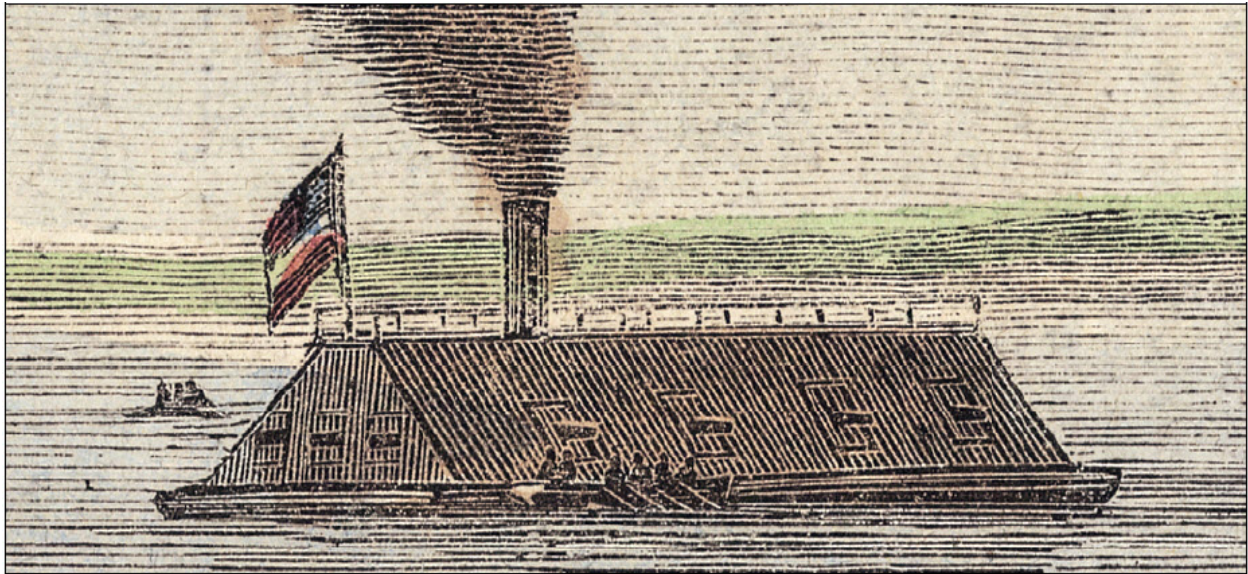


SUPSALV begins Phase One of CSS GEORGIA Archaeological Excavation

8 November 2013

The Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requested NAVSEA 00C (SUPSALV) provide technical assistance and conduct the removal of the historic remains of CSS GEORGIA that lie within the Savannah Harbor navigation channel near the intersection of the Back River Channel, Savannah, Georgia.



1863 Lithograph of CSS GEORGIA depicting the vessel as presented in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper of 21 February 1863.

CSS GEORGIA was a Confederate States ironclad used as a floating battery in the defense of Savannah, Georgia. She was scuttled in December 1864 to prevent capture by General W. T. Sherman's Army which was advancing on the city. GEORGIA, which lies adjacent to the Old Fort Jackson historical site, has been damaged by a previous salvage attempt and more significantly by maintenance dredging operations associated with Savannah Harbor Navigation Project.



Location of the CSS GEORGIA wreck site. (Base map courtesy of Google Earth)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is undertaking the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (<http://sav-harbor.com/>) which includes dredging the channel to a depth of 47 feet to support the passage of larger container ships. This planned dredging would have further adverse impacts on the artifact's remains necessitating a comprehensive salvage operation before dredging begins.

SUPSALV was asked to perform the salvage due to the demonstrated capability of SUPSALV for conducting the artifact removal, the presence of unexploded Civil War ordnance, and the fact that accountability for the CSS GEORGIA was transferred to the U.S. Navy from the General Services Administration in 2003.

Under the oversight of the Naval History and Heritage Command, the operation will be conducted in two phases. During Phase One, SUPSALV will direct a dive survey of the wreckage site and recover a small portion of the upper deck structure with its protective iron cladding. This phase will be used to evaluate the condition of the hull material and develop a plan to recover and relocate the remaining artifacts.

Phase one began this week with the loading of the salvage barge in the port of Savannah. SUPSALV is working with the Navy's Mobile Salvage and Diving Unit (MDSU) TWO based in Norfolk, VA who will be providing military divers and rigging support, DONJON Marine (SUPSALV's East Coast Salvage Contractor) who is providing the crane barge and towing vessels, and SUPSALV's Emergency Ship Salvage Material (ESSM) team from Norfolk who are providing specialized salvage equipment and manning. It is expected Phase One will wrap up by 17 November 2013. Phase Two is planned for 2014.



7 November 2013 image of the salvage crane barge and ESSM and MDSU TWO equipment staged pier side.