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## Humanitarian Exhumation at the Citadel's Johnson Hagood Stadium

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# Office of the State Archaeologist

## Humanitarian Exhumation at the Citadel's Johnson Hagood Stadium

By Jonathan M. Leader and Randy Burbage

The Citadel, the Military University of South Carolina, was the scene of a massive community and scientific effort this summer. Under the supervision of Co-principal Investigators Jonathan Leader (SCIAA) and Randy Burbage (Director of the Confederate Heritage Trust) 120 volunteers worked 12 14-hour days painstakingly excavating and sifting 300 cubic yards of earth. The result was the recovery of 27 individuals mistakenly entombed under the Johnson Hagood stadium when it was built by the City of Charleston in 1947.

The 26 Confederate sailors and marines, and the remains of a three year old child, were carefully drawn in situ, photographed, and removed to individual boxes for transport to SCIAA for secure storage and forensic analysis. Four of the sailors were found as pairs in single burials. The state of the bodies and the historic

documents available made it possible to identify these individuals as members of the first crew of the *H. L. Hunley*. The *Hunley* was the first submarine to sink an enemy vessel in time of war. Five of the first crew perished when the



Volunteers shoving back the fill dirt floor of the stadium. (SCIAA photo courtesy of Tirza I. Leader)



Jonathan Leader and Randy Burbage delineate a feature. (SCIAA photo courtesy of Tirza I. Leader)



Senator Glen McConnell, Randy Burbage, and John Trowe mapping the first *Hunley* grave, burial 17. (SCIAA photo courtesy of Tirza I. Leader)

vessel sank at its moorings at Fort Johnson. Considered to be a secret weapon, pains were taken to keep its operation and the subsequent deaths secret. This effort

became moot when it sank the second time claiming the life of its benefactor, Horace L. Hunley, and many of the mechanics who had helped build it at the Lyons Machine shop in Alabama.

Reburial of the 23 sailors and marines, not associated with the *Hunley*, as well as the child took place on November 12, 1999, at the Soldiers' Ground at Magnolia Cemetery. Fifteen horse drawn cannons with burial

platforms were used to transport the deceased to the cemetery. The funeral march started at the Charleston Battery and was lead and escorted by Civil War re-enactors in full period uniform. The first *Hunley* crew will be reburied in a separate ceremony early next year. An article in the next *Legacy* will provide a more in-depth discussion of the excavation and photographs from the reburial march and service.