H.L. Hunley Update

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H. L. Hunley Update
By Christopher Anier

Throughout the year, SCIAA has worked with the South Carolina Hunley Commission and the Friends of the Hunley to assist them in their goal of raising this historic vessel. In 1996, the commission and representatives of both the federal and state governments signed a programmatic agreement reaffirming federal ownership of this historic craft and turning over the raising and curating of the boat to South Carolina. The Underwater Archaeology Division continued its work on the H. L. Hunley Project through the review period. Using the ADAP III Marine Remote Sensing System, the division monitored the site for potential localized changes to the environment around this protected site. In May, the division conducted remote sensing operations over the sites of the Hunley and Housatonic. Concurrently, staff from the Naval Historical Center worked with the US Geological Survey to take core samples of sediments around the two sites. The information from these cores will be used to help plan the recovery of the submarine in 2001. In June, the Underwater Archaeology Division and the Naval Historical Center coordinated on a project to investigate the Housatonic and two magnetic anomalies associated with the two sites (see article on Pages 22-25). Work focused on identifying the larger of the magnetic anomalies, which turned out to be an historic buoy that once marked the location of the Housatonic. Archaeologists on this project continue to conduct test excavations within the Housatonic site in an attempt to delineate the wreck and answer research questions about the engagement that took place on the evening of February 17, 1864. Investigation of the sites is funded jointly by SCIAA, the Naval Historical Center, and the Friends of the Hunley. Division staff and myself are actively assisting the commission in its efforts to raise the funds necessary to raise, conserve, and display the Hunley in perpetuity, through public lectures and by consulting on a variety of television, journal, and fundraising events. The recent made-for-TV movie on the Hunley acknowledged the assistance of the division in making the film during its recent premier.

A school group visits the Friends of the Hunley mobile exhibit during its recent visit to Columbia. (SCIAA photo by Christopher Anier)