

Navy EOD Plans for Civil War Era Ordnance Recovery Effort

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Savannah, Georgia A Navy EOD dive team is scheduled to conduct an underwater UXO clearance around the sunken CSS Georgia in support of a salvage operation to recover the Civil War Era vessel for historical purposes. Original estimates of six UXO in the area were increased to over 70 following a USACE survey of the area. The increased in the number of expected targets caused a three week delay in the project.

Navy EOD plans to recover as many ordnance as they can intact as the Naval History and Heritage Command expressed a desire to conserve as many of ordnance as possible due to their intrinsic historical value. Plans for the operation call for the 20-man crew from EOD Mobile Unit 6 Detachment Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay to place the ordnance in holding fixtures until Marine EOD technicians can inert the items (Marines are the only service authorized to inert munitions).

Salvage and recovery work is expected to last until September as parts of the vessel including the four guns are removed and recovered. Dive operations are fairly shallow, estimated at 35 to 50 feet, but portions of the wreckage are buried in thick mud and sediment making the job difficult. The effort is not just for historical purposes as the wreckage is just outside a shipping channel that will be expanded in the future.

The CSS Georgia was built in 1862 and is estimated at 160 feet in length, with a beam of 55 feet and a 10-foot draft. The ship was scuttled on Dec. 20, 1864, as Union troops seized the city of Savannah.