

# H *The* HUNLEY

By Melissa Harrison

**O**n Saturday, April 17, 2004, tens of thousands of re-enactors, history buffs and the world's news media alike converged in Charleston, SC, for an extraordinary funeral. Eight maritime pioneers who had been lost at sea for 140 years were finally laid to rest. They were the third and final crew of the Confederate H.L. Hunley, the historic submarine that, in the swells of the Civil War, delivered the first successful submarine attack.

On February 17, 1864, the mysterious sea-faring vessel emerged from the depths of Charleston Harbor to strike down the Union Navy's USS Housatonic. And as quickly as the enemy warship vanished into the sea, so did the men and the machine that launched the fatal blow.

This historic burial was the culmination of the vessel's long journey home.

Resurrected from the harbor floor just four years ago, the Hunley is now stationed at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center in North Charleston. The fallen submarine was finally discovered in 1995 by author and adventurer Clive Cussler, and its eventual recovery and conservation is one of South Carolina's crowning achievements. Thanks to the incredible

efforts of the Hunley Commission and a non-profit organization, Friends of the Hunley, this pioneering secret weapon is now permanently embedded in maritime history. The historic attraction not only offers the world a glimpse of the extraordinary potential of maritime warfare but also pays tribute to the courageous men who lost their lives because of it.

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Tours of the Hunley are available only on the weekends, but awe-inspiring views

of the submarine and vestiges from the crew make it well-worth the trip. The imposing, motionless vessel hovers in a custom-built tank in the Center's Conservation Lab, and a life-size model from the TNT movie, *The Hunley*, also is on display. Fascinating, storied relics include the legendary gold coin carried by Lt. George Dixon, the identification tag of Union soldier Ezra Chamberlin and other invaluable discoveries.

*Find out more...*

Call 1-877-Hunley or visit [www.hunley.org](http://www.hunley.org) for more information on The Hunley.