

## **NOAA and Partners to Survey Ships Sunk off North Carolina during World War II**

National Ocean Service Diving Deeper special report

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### **[INTRODUCTION]**

This is a special report from Diving Deeper where we interview National Ocean Service scientists on the ocean topics and information that are important to you.

From August 4-24, NOAA will lead a three-week research expedition to study World War II shipwrecks sunk in 1942 off the coast of North Carolina during the Battle of the Atlantic. The shipwrecks are located in an area known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic," which includes sunken vessels from U.S. and British naval fleets, merchant ships, and German U-boats.

We recently sat down with Dave Alberg, Sanctuary Superintendent for the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary, which houses the "Graveyard of the Atlantic."

Here is Dave Alberg explaining how and why scientists study shipwrecks such as those within the Battle of the Atlantic site in his own words...

### **[DAVE ALBERG, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent]**

DAVE ALBERG: Using the Battle of the Atlantic as an example, the relationship between a number of shipwrecks lost at the same time during a particular battle begins to form a battlefield landscape. And typically we think of battlefields as terrestrial concepts, but as we look at sites off North Carolina and really around the world related to maritime history, we see that there's actually these battlefield landscapes that exist under the water as well.

HOST: What do you look for when you're first exploring a site and how do we use the information that's collected?

DAVE ALBERG: Well I think it depends on the objectives of the expedition. In the case of the *Monitor* for instance, the maritime heritage resources that were associated with the wreck site, the way that they were studied was through recovery, very careful and in many cases, long-term conservation of those artifacts so that they'd be preserved forever in a public institution like the Mariners' Museum so that future generations of Americans for hundreds of years will be able to come and study these artifacts. Scholars will be able to use these artifacts to better understand and preserve the history of the Civil War and the role that the *Monitor* played in that event.

But I think in other cases, where we are studying a maritime heritage site, maybe recovery is not part of the dynamic at all. In those cases, it's trying to preserve and capture the history and the stories associated with that site or that shipwreck without having to do excavation. So for instance last summer and this summer when we're continuing our work on the Battle of the Atlantic sites, it will include photo-documentation and archaeological site plans and a great deal of harvesting of research and information that's been out there from a number of sources so that we're capturing and preserving this history within the final report which will then be released to the public and hopefully that research is built on by other researchers in years to come.

### **[OUTRO]**

That was Dave Alberg, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent.

Check back at [oceanservice.noaa.gov](http://oceanservice.noaa.gov) on August 26 for an extended podcast on maritime heritage.

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POC: Kate Nielsen, 301-713-3010, ext. 138

[Katherine.Nielsen@noaa.gov](mailto:Katherine.Nielsen@noaa.gov)