

## Historic Confederate sub raised from sea

Re-enactors fire a cannon on Sullivans Island near Charleston to salute the raising of the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley, the first submarine in history to sink an enemy warship. The sub was raised by crane this morning.



PAULA ILLINGWORTH/Associated Press

### Hunley is returned to surface after 135 years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Charleston** — The Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley was lifted from the Atlantic Ocean today, more than 135 years after it became the first sub to sink an enemy warship and then disappeared into the water.

The submarine sank with nine crew members in 1864 after ramming a spar with a charge of black powder into the hull of the Union blockade vessel Housatonic. It was pulled from about 30 feet of water about 4 miles off Sullivans Island shortly before 9 a.m.

To raise the vessel, divers slipped slings attached to a steel superstructure above the sub. The superstructure and the submarine were then lifted together to begin the journey to the Charleston Harbor.

Among those on hand for the event were Clive Cussler, whose expedition discovered the wreck in 1995, Gov. Jim Hodges and state Sen. Glenn McConnell, chairman of the state Hunley Commission.

"It's just a sight to behold," McConnell said. "It's an incredible sight. The sub — it looks as sleek and everything as we thought."

Cussler was at a loss for words.

"I'm numb," he said. "It's a great feeling."

Hundreds of sailboats, kayakers and pleasure craft hovered around the crane to watch as workers secured the Hunley on the barge for the trip back to a conservation facility at the old Charleston Navy Base.

The minute the superstructure broke the surface, Confederate re-enactors fired a cannon volley from Sullivans Island at Breach Inlet, where the Hunley left on its ill fated voyage on Feb. 17, 1864.

Sea cadets waving a blue-lensed lantern were to lead the Hunley back to shore. The lantern is similar to one the Hunley crew used

to signal it had sunk the Housatonic. But the signal was the last Confederate sentries saw of the Hunley, said Gary Dowe, who helped organize the welcome home for the vessel.

Why the hand-cranked vessel made from locomotive boilers never returned is a mystery researchers hope to solve.

At the conservation lab, a bugler was to play taps and ministers were to bless the sub with the remains of its crew, the third crew to die aboard the submarine. A dive team funded by Cussler found the Hunley intact save for some minor damage.

The expedition to raise the vessel began in May, but was delayed for about a month after a crane mounted on a barge proved unwieldy. Officials later found a crane with legs that could be sunk in the ocean floor.

The conservation of the submarine is expected to take about seven years. It will then go on display in a new wing at the Charleston museum.