

Students locate Civil War ship

June 24 2005

Students at East Carolina University have located the remains of a U.S. warship that tried to wrest control of the Roanoke River from the Confederacy.

The USS Otsego was commissioned in the spring of 1864 and sank that December after striking a cluster of Confederate mines. The wreck was left on the river bottom and then pushed into a hole in the 1930s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Larry Babits, director of ECU's maritime program, told the Raleigh News & Observer student divers used sonar and metal detectors to search a 6-mile stretch of the river. Once the wreck was found, the students dived over and over again in the murky waters, reporting to others on top who were mapping the site.

Babits said the wreck is important because the other ships in its class were scrapped.

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