



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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S.C. State Museum to Present
Hunley Submarine Program

Columbia, S.C. – Visitors to the South Carolina State Museum will have one more chance this summer to learn the fateful history of the Confederate submarine *H. L. Hunley* when the museum presents “The Mystery of the H. L. Hunley” on Saturday, Aug. 13. Presentations will be on the hour from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Retired submariner Stonewall “Stoney” Hilton will tell the tale of the historic night in February, 1864 when the *Hunley* sank the *USS Housatonic* just outside Charleston Harbor. Known as the “Confederate secret weapon,” the *Hunley* was the world’s first successful combat submarine—the first sub to sink another ship, a feat that did not occur again until World War I.

“However, the mystery underlying that night was that after sinking the Union ship, the *Hunley* and all her crew vanished into the sea without a trace,” said Curator of History Fritz Hamer. “The solution to that mystery has spurred on explorers and treasure seekers (even the great P. T. Barnum) for well over a hundred years.”

The water did not give up its secrets, though, until modern technology joined forces with another great adventurer, author Clive Cussler. After 15 years of searching, on May 3, 1995, the Cussler crew discovered the *Hunley* buried deep within the sand and silt just outside Charleston Harbor.

What followed has been a grand adventure itself, undertaken by the Hunley Commission, created by the state of South Carolina to acquire, recover and preserve the *H. L. Hunley* submarine, one of the greatest, most sought-after artifacts in the history of naval warfare, for public display.

Hilton was a crew member of the *USS Nautilus*, the first atomic submarine, which in 1958 also became the first sub to cross under the North Pole. A longtime volunteer with the Friends of the Hunley, he also will present the latest findings of the Warren Lasch Conservation Laboratory, which currently houses the *Hunley*.

Seating is limited for Hilton's talks at the *Hunley* replica on the fourth floor of the museum.

Hilton's presentation is part of many military-related activities offered as part of the Southeastern Toy Soldier Show, which will feature 30 exhibitors from across the Southeast showing, buying and selling toy soldiers (called "military miniatures" by hobbyists) from all periods of history, plus other military memorabilia. The day's offerings also include several miniature dioramas featuring battles or other scenes from military history.

In addition, guests will see living history re-enactments on the museum's front grounds by the South Carolina Volunteer Infantry and other re-enactment groups. Encampments depicting various military units from the Revolutionary War to Operation Desert Storm will be featured, along with military vehicles from World War II to Vietnam.

The program is free with museum admission or membership. Please contact 803-898-4952, publicprograms@scmuseum.org or www.southcarolinastatemuseum.org for more information.

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CUTLINE FOR STONEY HILTON'S HUNLEY TALK

As part of the Southeastern Toy Soldier Show, the South Carolina State Museum will present "The Mystery of the H.L. Hunley" on Saturday, Aug. 13. Retired submariner Stonewall "Stoney" Hilton will tell the tale of that fateful night in February 1864 when the Confederate submarine *H.L. Hunley* sank the *USS Housatonic* just outside Charleston Harbor.

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Photo by Susan Dugan/courtesy S.C. State Museum

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