



The Source for Navy News

www.news.navy.mil

Search for John Paul Jones' Warship Going Well

Story Number: NNS060727-11

Release Date: 7/27/2006 3:29:00 PM



From Naval Historical Center Public Affairs

BRIDLINGTON, U.K. (NNS) -- A search for Bonhomme Richard, the flagship of Capt. John Paul Jones, father of the U.S. Navy, kicked off in the waters off Flamborough Head, July 18.

The archaeological survey is being conducted by a combined American and British team of archaeologists, educators and surveyors.

Led by the Ocean Technology Foundation, a U.S.-based non-profit organization, this research team includes the U.S. Navy's Naval Historical Center (NHC), and Osiris Projects, a survey company in Wirral, U.K.

The team's Yorkshire base of operations is located in Bridlington and the team was invited here by the Bridlington Regeneration Partnership. Team members began arriving from the United States in early July, and operations will continue for another three weeks. The weather has been exceptionally good and the team has been able to survey 100 square kilometers.

This is the first year of a multi-year survey project to find the shipwreck. However, the team has been preparing for this expedition for more than two years.

"In order to be fully prepared for this year's survey, we have conducted intensive historical research, mapped known wrecks and environmental data in an electronic Geographic Information System (GIS), and produced the first computerized drift model dedicated to finding an ancient shipwreck," said Ryan.

"This year's survey consists of the remote sensing and mapping of hundreds of miles of seafloor with state-of-the-art remote sensing equipment," said Dr. Robert Neyland, principal archeologist for the search and head of the NHC's Underwater Archaeology Branch.

The principal tools of the team are a side-scan sonar and marine magnetometer. Both tools can detect possible shipwreck targets, identifying them by their shape and magnetism. They are then plotted for later possible underwater investigation. The survey is taking place well out to sea, more than 15 nautical miles from Flamborough Head.

"The survey vessel and equipment, as well as the weather, have worked perfectly and to date we have completed the first of our three primary search areas," said Ryan. "Although we are only one-third of the way through the survey, we have already identified targets worthy of further investigation in the 2007 season."

When the survey is complete, the electronic sonar and magnetic data will be analyzed by both Osiris Projects and the NHC, and will certainly produce additional targets.

"Positive identification of the shipwreck will require diving and investigating the targets in a return expedition," said Neyland. "Diving on the targets may not involve human divers, but will more likely take advantage of remotely operated vehicles, called ROVs, that can work efficiently



Official U.S. Navy file photo of John Paul Jones' tomb at the U.S. Naval Academy. Jones is forever immortalized by uttering the words, "I have not yet begun to fight", during the battle between USS Bonhomme Richard and HMS Serapis, off the coast of England in 1779. An expedition is currently searching off the coast of Great Britain for the wreck of Bonhomme Richard.

[View Larger](#)[Download HiRes](#)

Search:

 [MS Word Friendly](#)[Print Friendly](#)[Subscribe NavNews](#)[Submit Story/Photos](#)[Tools](#)[Contact Us](#)[Privacy & Security](#)[About This Site](#)[External Links](#)[Home](#)

in the considerable depths where the team believe the wreck lies.”

Sept. 23, 1779, Jones engaged HMS Serapis in one of the most memorable battles in U.S. naval history. It was during this three-and-a-half-hour fight, most of it taking place at point blank range, that Jones shouted his legendary words, “I have not yet begun to fight!” Ultimately, he emerged victorious and took control of Serapis. Bonhomme Richard had served him well; 36 hours later, Jones watched his ship disappear beneath the waters of the North Sea.

“The battle was a turning point in the War of American Independence, and showed the world that the young Continental Navy was a force to be reckoned with,” said Historical Researcher Peter Reaveley. It also helped to convince the French to loan the U.S. more resources to keep fighting the war.

“John Paul Jones and Bonhomme Richard are as important to the U.S. as Adm. Lord Nelson and his ship HMS Victory [are to the British],” Reaveley said.

For related news, visit the Naval Historical Center Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/navhist/.

[E-mail this story to a friend](#) | [Send a comment about this story](#)

Related Stories:

Two U.S. Navy Vessels Named Flagships for BHR Expedition - 3/14/2006 