THE CONFEDERATE NAVAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

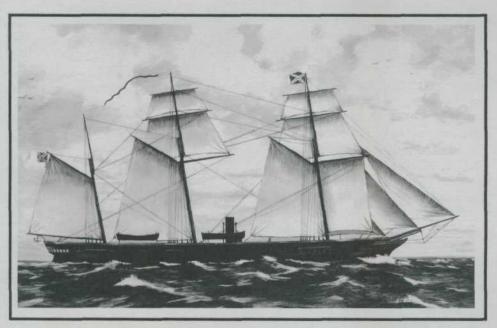
Issue Number Two -- October 1989

C.S.S. Alabama Accord Signed By France And The United States -- Opens Avenues For U.S., French, And British Cooperation

On October 3rd, at 5:30 P.M. France signed an agreement with the U.S. concerning the rights and handling procedures governing the wreck of the C.S.S. Alabama off Cherbourg. In the agreement, France retains its right to maintain a "zone of protection" around the site, which lies near its most important submarine base. In addition, the French government will

work on the ship.

Who is going to appoint the committee members is not covered, nor is the recognition of U.S. title to the wreck or its artifacts actually spelled out. However, an accompanying State Department release claims that such title has been recognized by the French and that the committee will be set up in the next three months.



C.S.S. Alabama in print based on Gehagen plan rendering

handle all authorizations for work on the wreck. Each country will have the right to one observer on the site and there is to be a "scientific committee" made up of two government representatives from each side and assorted experts to determine what measures will be taken. The same committee will also authorize and determine what part Britain will play in future Furthermore, the agreement can be cancelled by either party on three months' notice, so the future of the *Alabama* is by no means resolved. The careful cooperation of all concerned parties in the U.S., France, and England will be required to bring any long-range development of the project to fruition. Proper excavation of the wreck and conservation of its arti-

facts will take many years and many millions of dollars, much of which needs to be raised before further work can be done. Either haste or personal/regional disagreements as to the specific disposition of the ship's artifacts could spell disaster to this agreement and its subsequent projects.

The heritage wrapped up in the C.S.S. Alabama belongs to the peoples of all three nations concerned and not to any one individual or group therein. Thus it behooves all interested parties in the matter to act with this purpose in mind in future development so that the interests of the ship herself and those of the public at large be properly served. Captain Raphael Semmes preferred that she sink before being taken as a prize — it is hoped his efforts will not be proved in vain.

We expect there will be many more positive and tangible developments to report on this subject by the time of the publication of our next newsletter, so stay tuned...

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EDITORIAL:

The Surprising (To Some) Historical Impact Of The Confederate Navy...

One of the pleasant responsibilities of a Board member of the CNHS is speaking to various groups about the Confederate Navy -- what it stood for, how it was organized, its accomplishments, and particularly its disproportionate impact upon subsequent naval history.

The latter is what usually draws a laugh at first -- after all, what possible impact could a tiny, underbudgeted and underarmed 6,000-man navy with a brief life of only four years have upon the vast seagoing armed forces of the major world powers? The answers are multiple, and to some surprising. First, there is the technical end. During a period of rapid development of naval technology, the CSN was the first to decide to jump headfirst into ironclads as the bulwark of the fleet. While other navies, including the U.S., were undecided as to their value (which seems obvious to us in hindsight today), Mallory's commitment was unequivocal, following his own previous advice as U.S. Senate Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs. Before the War was over, it was clear that the ironclad was the wave of the future worldwide.

Similarly, there had been various experiments made with fixed underwater torpedoes (mines) in various countries, but it was the CSN that not only rapidly accelerated their development, including the electric mine, but formulated their use as a primary form of strategic defense system in rivers and harbors nationwide. This development, ignored by the North until the extreme toll by mine warfare made itself evident, was quickly adopted as a primary home defense strategy by all the world powers.

Along the same lines, the concept of the submarine had been around since the 1600's, but none was used successfully in warfare until the C.S.S. Hunley destroyed the U.S.S. Housatonic, awakening the world to the new reality that what lurked beneath the waves could be far more deadly than what floated upon them.

Outside of technical innovations, the CSN also seized a strategic window that had just opened in the worldwide destruction of an enemy's merchant fleet by naval commerce raiders. Thanks to the oceanographic charts researched by M.F.Maury (who later invented the electric mine for the CSN), the world's sail-powered shipping during the 1850's had concentrated itself into narrow sea lanes vulnerable to attack by fast, steam-powered cruisers that could destroy helpless merchantmen, yet outmaneuver more heavily armed naval vessels sent to catch them. This uniquely successful strategy did not fall on deaf ears, but presaged the rise of the commerce raider in both World Wars as well as the pocket battleship.

Of all the world powers that noted the Confederate example, Germany probably derived the most from Mallory's desperate strategies -- probably because Germany shared many of the Confederacy's naval limitations, having to rely on a small, motivated, high-yield navy based by necessity on quality, not quantity. It is worthy of note that Raphael Semmes's Service Afloat was made required reading for all officers, level captain and above, in the German navy.

The CSN was a navy driven by necessity, in whose wake many were to follow, more than most remember...- John Townley

CNHS Board Member Kevin Foster To Be New Director Of Confederate Naval Museum in Georgia

CNHS Vice-President Kevin Foster has been appointed Acting Director of the Confederate Naval Museum in Columbus, Georgia, to replace Bob Holcombe who has stepped down to continue his degree program at East Carolina University. Mr. Holcombe is expected to return as curator of the museum at a later date with Mr. Foster retaining the post of director, perhaps within the next year or so.

Mr. Foster will have the challenge of spearheading a \$10 million development project, the goal of which will be relocation to a newly-chosen riverside museum site and greatly expanded facilities, programs, and exhibits.

A formal reception will be held at the museum to celebrate the new appointment, coinciding with the next CNHS Board Of Directors Meeting in Columbus on the weekend of November 10-11.

The CNHS congratulates Mr. Foster on his new position and looks forward to future cooperative projects with the Confederate Naval Museum.

This newsletter is published quarterly by The Confederate Naval Historical Society, Inc., the non-profit corporation for the preservation of the maritime history of the Confederacy, for distribution to its Associates. All material ©copyright 1989 by The Confederate Naval Historical Society, Inc. Associate membership in the CNHS is available at the following ranks: Lieutenant (\$20), Captain (\$50), Commodore (\$1000+), and Rear Admiral (\$10,000+). All associates receive a 15"x18" CSN Commission for their ranks, Cpt. and above receive special presentations commensurate with their stations. All contributions are tax deductible. CNHS, 710 Ocran Road, White Stone, VA 22578, U.S.A. Phone: (804) 435-0014. Editor: John Townley

Where They Lie:

U.S. Naval Historical Society Begins Civil War Database -- Locations And Conditions Of Ironclads Are First Listings In Continuing Project

The U.S. Naval Historical Center has recently begun a data base of the location and condition of Civil War wrecks, beginning with the ironclads, under the direction of Capt. M.D. Roberts, MSC, USNR-R. The following list has been compiled so far, and those wishing to add further information should contact him at the U.S. Naval Historical Center, Historical Research Branch, Bldg. 57, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374. This is a major project and one which could result in the rescue of many ships and the retrieval of much invaluable historical information. Our congratulations on this excellent undertaking!

NAME OF VESSEL	RECENT	SITE OF SINKING	CONDITION
CSS Richmond	No	Chapin's Bluff	Unknown, unverified 30% remaining
CSS Fredericksburg	1871	Drewry's Bluff	Unknown, buried, unverified 100% intact
CSS Virginia II	1871	Drewry's Bluff	Unknown, buried, unverified 100% intact
CSS Virginia I	1980	Craney Island	Salvaged, large pieces may remain
USS Monitor	1985	Hatteras, NC	Poor, badly deteriorated
CSS Neuse	Raised	Kinston, NC	70% hull, no deck/casemate
CSS North Carolina	Yes	Smithfield, NC	Possibly intact, stripped during Civil War
			Broken up in 1870 by Corps of Engineers
CSS Raleigh	Yes	Cape Fear, NC	Removed at end of Civil War, pieces left
CSS Chicora	No	Charleston, SC	
CSS Palmetto State	No	Charleston, SC	Removed at end of Civil War, pieces left
USS Weehauken	No	Charleston, SC	Hull remains, salvaged post-Civil War
USS Keokuk	No	Charleston, SC	Hull remains, salvaged post-Civil War
USS Patapsco	No	Charleston, SC	Hull remains, salvaged post-Civil War
CSS Milledgeville	No	Savannah, GA	Removed from channel by Corps
CSS Savannah	No	Savannah, GA	Generally intact, buried by dredging
CSS Georgia	Yes	Savannah, GA	Hull remains, some deck/casemate
CSS Jackson	Raised	Columbus, GA	60% hull, 4 Brooke RB, no machinery
USS Tecumseh	Yes	Mobile, AL	100% intact, some hull deterioration
USS Milwaukee	No	Mobile, AL	Not intact, salvaged post-Civil War
CSS Phoenix	Yes	Mobile, AL	Burned, hull basically intact
CSS Tuscaloosa	Yes	Mobile, AL	100% intact, hull partially covered
CSS Huntsville	Yes	Mobile, AL	100% intact, hull partially covered
CSS Tombigbee #3	No	Tombigbee River	Burned, hull intact
CSS Tombigbee #4	No	Tombigbee River	Burned, hull intact
CSS Louisiana	No	New Orleans, LA	Unknown, possible site location
CSS Mississippi	No	New Orleans, LA	Unknown
CSS Manassas	?	New Orleans, LA	Unknown, possible site location
USS Eastport	No	Grand Ecore, AR	Burned, portions of hull remain
CSS Arkansas	No	Baton Rouge, LA	Unknown, possible site location
USS Cairo	Raised	Vicksburg, MS	Essentially intact, damaged
USS Baron DeKalb	Yes	Below Yazoo City	Portion of hull remains
CSS Tennessee I	No	Memphis, TN	Unknown, believed totally destroyed
Cao a cimossoci	110	monipmo, 114	

Destroyed, No Remains	2
Location/Condition Unknown	4
Location Known/Condition Unknown	
Location Known/Surveyed	15
Raised, on display	3
Total	

C.S.S. FLORIDA

...SCUTTLED IN HAMPTON ROADS?...



C.S.S. Florida pursues a Union prize in this 1862 painting by Samuel Walters.

In the coming issues of the newsletter we will be spotlighting various CSN ships and giving an update on their location, condition, and current circumstances. We begin with the cruiser C.S.S. Florida, as this November 28th marks the 125th anniversary of her sinking in Hampton Roads.

Of the several CSN cruisers and commerce-raiders, next to the *Alabama*, the *Florida* and the *Shenandoah* are probably the best known. Her location is

also well-known, though largely forgotten by the people who live and work only a few hundred yards from her wreck in Newport News, Virginia.

The Florida was built in Liverpool by the firm of W.C. Miller and Sons, and was the first of the famous British-built cruisers to go to sea -- she left the Mersey on March 22, 1862 and made her way to the Bahamas where she was armed and then commissioned on August 17. She was

immediately struck by yellow fever, and her commander, former blockade-runner John Newland Maffitt, discovered to his dismay that in the process of arming her, various pieces of equipment needed to operate her guns had been forgotten, so she was incapable of fighting. With his crew dwindling from disease and himself weak from the fever, Maffitt dashed unarmed through the Union blockade at Mobile and successfully anchored under the

guns of Fort Morgan on September 4th, with serious but repara-

ble damage to the ship.

After a long period of repair and crew-gathering, Maffitt ran the blockade again on January 16, 1863 and embarked on a cruise of devastation to Union shipping that rivalled her sister ship Alabama (which had already been cruising for nearly six months and was in fact quite nearby in the Gulf, where she would take on the U.S.S. Hatteras off Galveston only a few days later). After six months of cruising, which resulted in a variety of successful catches including the clipper ship Jacob Bell, valued at \$2,000,000, Maffitt put in at Brest and left the ship to recover from the residual and cumulative effects of yellow fever. There he turned the Florida over to Commodore J.N. Barney, whose subsequent illness resulted in the ship being put under the command of Lt. C.M. Morris. who took her back out to sea on February 10, 1864.

On this second cruise, prizes were harder to find (most Northern shipping having fled to foreign flags), and the cause of the Confederacy was waning abroad as well as at home, which made coaling and resupply ports scarcer and more hostile. Finally, she pulled into the neutral port of Bahia, Brazil, in early September of 1864, where she found the U.S.S. Wachusett anchored as well. Worried that a confrontation might occur in their waters, the Brazilian government was assured by the U.S. Consul and Wachusett's Commander Napoleon Collins that their neutrality

Accordingly, Morris moved the *Florida* closer to shore for safety's sake and took the larger part of her crew ashore on liberty, leaving only a nominal party on watch aboard. In the dead of the night, Collins ordered the *Wachusett* to get underway and

would be respected.

attempted to ram the unsuspecting Florida. Delivering only a glancing blow, he opened fire on her with small arms and cannon and quickly took her and her skeleton crew captive. Hurriedly, he ordered a tow line attached and towed her out under fire from the forts to the open sea, unsuccessfully pursued by several Brazilian warships when they were able to make steam. The Florida was towed into Hampton Roads, where after an accidental collision had put her in a leaking condition she was eventually anchored only a few hundred vards from where the U.S.S. Cumberland's masts protruded from the water, victim of the Southern ironclad Virginia.

Despite a watch put aboard her to see she was continually pumped out, she suddenly sank abruptly

and mysteriously.

This was a happy convenience for the Federal government which, after multiple international protests from Brazil and other nations, had admitted that the *Florida* had been illegally seized and had agreed to send her back to Brazil for subsequent return to the Confederacy. The embarassment of such a return was thus forever forestalled.

Since then, the Florida has lain forgotten and undisturbed in her grave until 1980 when novelist (and CNHS Cpt.) Clive Cussler embarked on an attempt to locate the wreck and that of the Cumberland not far from her. His non-profit historical organization the National Underwater Marine Agency (NUMA) in conjunction with the state archaeological agency the Virginia Research Center For Archaeology (VRCA) searched for the wrecks without success until contracting archaeologist Sam Margolin's Underwater Archaeological Joint Ventures (UAJC), which in 1981 successfully located both wrecks and retrieved a few sample artifacts for identification purposes.

But at the end of the diving season, all permits were permanently suspended because the U.S. Navy laid claim to the wreck, alleging it to have been Navy property upon its sinking and not to have been abandoned since. Upon this claim, the Navy took possession of all the artifacts recovered and has been sitting on it ever since, stymying all attempts by NUMA, VRCA, and UAJC to do further work at the site.

Does the Navy really own the C.S.S. Florida? Not likely, because she was illegally seized. The illegality of the seizure was openly admitted with due apology in a letter to the Imperial Legation of Brazil from U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward dated December 26, 1864, which abrogates any legitimate claim upon the ship the Navy might make. It is likely the Navy was unaware of this when its claims were made, but nothing so far has been done to correct the situation.

So if the Navy doesn't own it, who does? Clearly, the General Services Administration (GSA), as all Confederate government property officially devolved upon that agency at the close of the War -- but that may be even worse, as GSA has shown little interest in involving itself with marine archaeological matters, and just finding someone who will take the responsibility of even discussing it has so far been impossible. Feelers have also been put forward to Newport News and the State of Virginia to move on this, as it is also their history and retrieval of it would be to their joint credit and advantage, but so far, no one is interested.

So while nations vie for rights and artifacts of the *Alabama*, her older sister lies abandoned and apparently unwanted six fathoms deep, buried beneath the mud of the James River.

Review:

U.S.S. Monitor / C.S.S. Virginia Video Features First-Class Production, Attractive Price

CNHS Capt. Bill Koff sends us this review -- he heads <u>Volun-</u> <u>teers</u>, the newsletter of Civil War gaming at 146 Chimney Lane, Wilmington, NC 28403.

Ironclads: The Monitor and the Merrimac, produced by Atlas Video. The fine production of this thirty minute videotape program contributes greatly to its capacity both to enlighten and to entertain, even upon repeated viewing. The tape's professionalism is evident in the narration by reknowned commentator Edwin Newman, as well as in the period and original music score by Grammy Award winner Jon Carroll. The format relies largely upon scanned, magnified, and full-view images of period prints,

etchings, paintings, and photos, interspersed with interviews with a number of historians.

The development of the ironclad warship is placed in the proper historical context by presenting images of the European predecessors to America's first ironclads. Construction of both Union and Confederate vessels is described, with the benefit of such aids as a section of armor plating from the C.S.S. Virginia and blueprints and an original builder's model of the U.S.S.

A fairly detailed account of the 1862 battle between these two vessels is given, including an explanation of why both sides claimed victory. The narration fails to mention the consternation

and outright panic felt by many in the North (including Secretary of War Edwin L. Stanton) upon hearing news of the Virginia's attack on the Union wooden fleet.

Also lacking from the program is any mapwork, other than a map printed on the back cover of the tape box. Current-day views of the battle site of Hampton Roads, perhaps even including some aerial views of the region, would have enhanced the presentation. The program closes with recent underwater footage of the wreck of the *Monitor*, along with a discussion of current archaeological efforts and future plans for this historic treasure.

Since this is the only Civil War naval videotape available, even if it were mediocre or overpriced it would have a ready audience. As it turns out, this seamless production, at a price of \$19.95, should prove to be very popular among Civil War naval enthusiasts.

Shenandoah 125th To Be Held In Australia

As the 125th anniversary of the C.S.S. Shenandoah's visit to Australia this January and February draws near, the Australian Civil War Round Table and the government post office are preparing to mark the event with a special souvenir pictorial postmark at Williamstown, where the ship was put up for repair and a nice booklet covering the history of the visit prepared by Barry Crompton and Dale Blair. Those interested in receiving a copy of the booklet or a souvenir cover should contact Barry at 14 Sunlight Crescent, East Brighton, Victoria 3187, Australia.

Also in the planning stages at press time was the dedication of a "Shenandoah Ballroom" at Craig's Hotel in nearby Ballarat, the original ballroom where the ship's officers were entertained at a "Buccaneer's Ball" by the hotel's wealthy American owners.

James River Squadron Remains Safe --Support Sought For Excavations, Replicas, And Museum...

We are happy to report that the endangered James River Squadron remains safe from dredges as the Richmond Port Authority conducts research to determine the exact location of the wrecks so as to avoid them.

Meanwhile, CNHS James River Squadron Committee Chairman Joe Ayers has been organizing local interest in the recovery of the vessels for museum display and developing the concept of an ironclad or Maury gunboat replica to be built to once more patrol the James and serve as a focus for local history and tourism. Those wishing to participate contact him at Box 790, Columbia, VA 23038.

New Edition Of Civil War Naval Chronicle In Preparation

CNHS Advisor William Dudlev at the U.S. Naval Historical Center has advised us he is working on a newly-edited version of the Civil War Naval Chronology, which has been out of print for the last several years. This massive 1100-page work was originally published in six volumes in 1971 by the U.S. Printing Office and was subsequently republished in a single volume. It has been an invaluable resource for all interested in Civil War Naval events and developments, as it covers the entire war on a day by day basis, as well as giving extensive background on everything from the ships and their histories to contemporary naval popular sheet music.

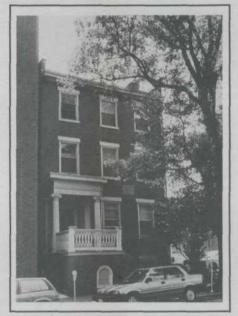
The new edition is scheduled for release sometime next year.

SOUND GENERAL QUARTERS!

Matthew Fontaine Maury House In Richmond In Danger Of Destruction By V.C.U.

Major innovations often have humble beginnings, which is certainly the case of the invention of the electric mine -- this deadly device was developed by Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury in the upstairs bathtub of his cousin's house at 1105 Clay St. in Richmond, Virginia where Maury resided during the first part of the War. Now there only remains a small plaque to remind the visitor of the occasion, but before long there may be nothing there at all, as Virginia Commonwealth University, which owns the land, intends to raze the modest Greekrevival building to make way for a new outpatient clinic for its medical college.

The college's Alumni Association, which owns the building itself, has made a valiant effort to save and preserve the building over the last nine years. They have over half a million dollars in a building fund to move the building to a lot across the street which



the University had promised to trade them for the one the house currently stands on. The Alumni Association originally used the house for its offices, but the space has been insufficient and it also needed to buy an additional piece of land next to the new lot to build additional office space.

John Low Uniform, Alabama Pennant On Display At New Market Museum

While travelling the length of Virginia recently, some of our number stopped along the endless ribbon of Interstate 81 to finally get a look at the Newmarket Battlefield Museum. The glass cases displayed a variety of swords and uniforms until suddenly, one unmarked case revealed a CSN Lieutenants gray uniform with deepwater buttons!

A quick inquiry with curator John Bracken revealed this to be the newly-acquired and not yet labelled uniform of Lt. John Low of Alabama and Tuscaloosa fame, and next to it his post-War British master's license and sword. Also acquired at the same time, but not yet on display when we were there, is the pennant of the Alabama that was plucked from the waters off Cherbourg by a passing yacht and sent to Low in 1880.

Newmarket Battlefield, Box 1131, Rt. 305, New Market, VA 22844. (703)740-8065.

The University has refused to sell it to them, and in the meantime termite damage to the house has caused it to be condemned, forcing out the offices and making it impossible to safely move the building.

The Alumni Association would still like to move it, brick by brick, reconstructing the damaged timber structure, to provide a rebuilt/restored version of the house which would house a Maury museum and alumni offices on the side. As of this date, the University has made no further offers of cooperation, and the scheduled building of the clinic in 1990 could spell the end of the Maury house in the very near future.

It seems strange to us that the house where the legendary "Pathfinder Of The Seas" -- the man who singlehandedly invented modern ocean geography -- made such important contributions should be so callously tossed away. It is even more tragic that this could happen when there is money available and an association committed to saving it, at no inconvenience to the University.

The bottom line of all this is Virginia politics. The deal that had already been struck was torpedoed (!) by a change of state governorship and a land exchange scandal at another state university. Now it seems safer to the University to see the landmark torn down than to proceed with an arrangement that might be subjected to scrutiny by an administration that may not support it. This does credit neither to the University nor to the state government who would rather let the treasure slip through the cracks to destruction than take the effort to cooperate in its preservation.

If you have suggestions to help stop this needless travesty, contact Alumni Association President Francis W. Kay, Box 156 MCV Sta., Richmond, VA 23298. (804) 786-0434.

New Section:

CSN Research, Requests, and Commentary...

Looking for research answers? At the CNHS offices we try to help with information and references — if we can't locate what you need, we'll refer it to our greatest resource — our Associates — in this column, along with other timely

requests and comments.

We've had a few requests we'd like to fill — especially for CNHS regalia of one sort or another, lapel pins, stickers, T-shirts, and the like. They will be coming, we promise, as soon as the budget allows! Similarly, we've had a couple of requests to officially bring the Marines into this outfit and issue a CS Marine commission. We'd love to, given the money (our CSN commission looks expensive, and was) and the whereabouts of an original to reproduce. Anybody know where one is?

From Dr. Robert Latorre, 300-7BE Lake Marina Dr., New Orleans, LA 70124:

"I was referred to your group regarding Mr. W.G.Cheeney, a master in the Confederate Navy who in 1861 designed a submarine built at Tredegar Iron Works. In 1862 he was in charge of torpedoes in the James River. Do you have any more details on Mr. Cheeney's activities or his sub design?"

From Meigs Brainard, 200 Millwood Circle #813, Maumelle, Ar-

kansas 72118:

"I am working on an article about the Confederate gunboats *Maurepas*, commanded by Cpt. Joseph Fry, and the *Ponchartrain*, commanded by Lt. J. W. Dunnington.

"I need pictures or drawings of either vessel, even pre-war when they were the *Grosse tete* and the *Lizzie Simmons*. Also the whereabouts of Cpt. Fry's naval log and if it was captured by the crew of the Federal ship *Lexington* and turned over to Col. Fitch who commanded the 46th Indiana Infantry. I also need a picture of Lt. Dunnington and any other info about these ships' histories and commanders."

Coming In Our Next Issue:

In September, Clive Cussler's intrepid divers tackled the site of one of the War's biggest naval battles to try to determine more about the location and condition of over a dozen Confederate and Union ships, including the Phoenix, Tuscalossa, Huntsville, Milwaukee, Tecumseh, and many more. We'll have a full report on what they've found, what's safe, and what's endangered...

>>> Major Developments At The Confederate Naval Museum. The only museum dedicated to the CSN has major plans for expansion -- \$10 million worth. A report on how they'll raise it, and how they'll spend it. >>> Plus, the latest news on CSN developments, our second "Where They Lie" research article, features, reviews, comments, and editorials, coming at year's end!

N.B.: If you liked the front-page picture of the C.S.S. Alabama, you can get the full-color 16"x20" print from which we shot it for \$25 ppd from Sail and Steam, Box 8930, Norfolk, VA 23502-0930. They also have one of the blockade runner Will-Of-The-Wisp, also from a Gehagen rendering, for the same price.

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