

HAUL HELPS RESEARCHERS RE-DISCOVER HISTORY

Approximately 150 years old – that’s the age of the cannons and Civil War-era artifacts Landstar BCOs hauled from Savannah, Georgia to Texas A&M University, northwest of Houston.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers actually found the artifacts by mistake, when in 2015 they began a \$700 million project to deepen the Savannah River. Once the dredging project started, divers found objects and artifacts that were determined to be from the CSS Georgia, a Civil War-era ironclad that sank to the bottom of the river in 1866.

“I got a call from a friend who is in the barge business and had started to move a lot of the artifacts out of the water. He said, ‘We need some trucks out here,’” recalls Landstar Agent Fred Otterbein.

Otterbein’s agency, Container Marketing Corp., quickly became involved with the project and won the bid to provide the logistical plan that would move about 20 truckloads of artifacts from the Savannah River to Texas A&M.

“We do a lot of specialized project loads, but this one was unique,” says Otterbein. “For this particular project, our agency had to coordinate all the moves with the U.S. Coast Guard. Things were literally being pulled out of the water and put directly onto trucks for transport.” In fact, Otterbein explains, because of the historical value, “Some of these artifacts had to be hauled within the estuary water from the Savannah.”

According to marine archeologists, very little is known about the CSS Georgia. No blue prints of the ship exist and historians have limited information about its construction. The conservation research laboratory at Texas A&M University is one of the few that can work with large artifacts, like cannons, to study and preserve them.

While the opportunity to examine the ship’s contents is an unusual one for archeologists and other researchers, it also was a rare opportunity for Landstar BCOs who hauled the artifacts to the lab.

“In 30 years in this industry, this was the highlight of my



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This Civil War canon is only one of the 30,000 artifacts that was recovered from the wreckage of the sunken ironclad.

career,” Landstar BCO Steve Corbett explained. “We put the barrel of a cannon on my truck and that thing weighed nearly 10,000 pounds.”

Corbett says the cannon he hauled was removed from the Savannah River, lifted by crane and placed in a dumpster. The cannon was then wrapped in plastic and the dumpster was lifted and secured onto the bed of Corbett’s low profile step-deck.

“The detail that went into getting this thing on my truck was incredible. Just the opening of the cannon barrel was nearly one foot across,” says Corbett.

In total, 30,000 artifacts were recovered from the wreckage of the sunken ironclad according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Of those, 16,600 of the relics researchers chose not to keep for further examination were documented, placed in storage containers and sunk back down into the Savannah River. According to researchers, storing those artifacts in the water will help preserve them. More than 13,000 pieces weighing about 142 tons were sent to Texas A&M for research – a project that is expected to keep researchers at the university busy for the next 10 years.

For more information on the artifacts pulled from the Savannah River head to the US Army Corps of Engineer’s website: www.sas.usace.army.mil

MOVING HISTORY

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