

During Past Weekend—

# Confederate Arms Salvaged

## Treasure Re-Buried

The Confederate blockade runner Ranger gave up a portion of her cargo of arms and munitions during the past weekend after lying buried in sand and water off Holden Beach for the past century.

Members of a U. S. Army Beach Reconnaissance Amphibious Team recovered the cargo in diving operations carried on under the eyes of hundreds of curious residents and weekend visitors at the Brunswick county beach resort.

Chief object of interest was a case of muskets which was dug up out of the sand Sunday. Paradoxically enough, once having brought the case of weapons to the surface, members of the supporting crew hurried ashore with the cargo to bury it again as quickly as possible in the wet sand. This was to prevent exposure to the atmosphere, which would set up rapid deterioration.

A contact was made with the folks in charge of diving operations of Fort Fisher, and arrangements were made to have a truck come to the Brunswick beach to take the case of firearms to the laboratory where they could be cleaned and preserved.

The operation is the first of any consequence attempted on any of the wrecks off the shores of Brunswick county, although diving operations have been underway for some time off Fort Fisher.

There is no connection between the local weekend activity and that of the salvage operations off the coast of New Hanover County. The local efforts were carried out by the Army team from Fort Eustis, Va., which was at Sunny Point last week on routine training operations. Word of the interesting recoveries being made at Fort Fisher prompted a request for permission to undertake a similar project at one of the known wrecks off the



Case of weapons buried temporarily in wet sand at Holden Beach. Crew stands by and LCU is shown in background on beach.

Brunswick coast. When this permission was granted, operations got underway.

On Wednesday an exploratory trip was made to the Ella, sunk off-shore from Bald Head Island. There was no success at this location, but having heard of the wreck of the Ranger, the men made their way down the coast off Holden Beach and made an exploratory trip underwater. When the divers came up with muskets, bayonets and scabbards, plans were laid for a more elaborate try on Sunday.

The Sunday operation paid off with recovery of the large case of muskets, and although there was no definite indication as to the condition of the weapons inside, there was a feeling that several valuable museum pieces may have been recovered from their watery resting place off Holden Beach.

The ship used for the salvage try is an LCU, 1st Lieut. Lidge O. J. Johnson, a native of Rockingham, is the commanding officer and is in charge of the crew. There were 11 divers aboard and 10 additional members of the crew.

In fact, there is more than a suspicion that a love for antique weapons may have played an important part in the salvage plans that were carried out during the past weekend. Lieut. Johnson confessed Friday afternoon that one of his most cherished possessions is a Confederate musket that he purchased several years ago from

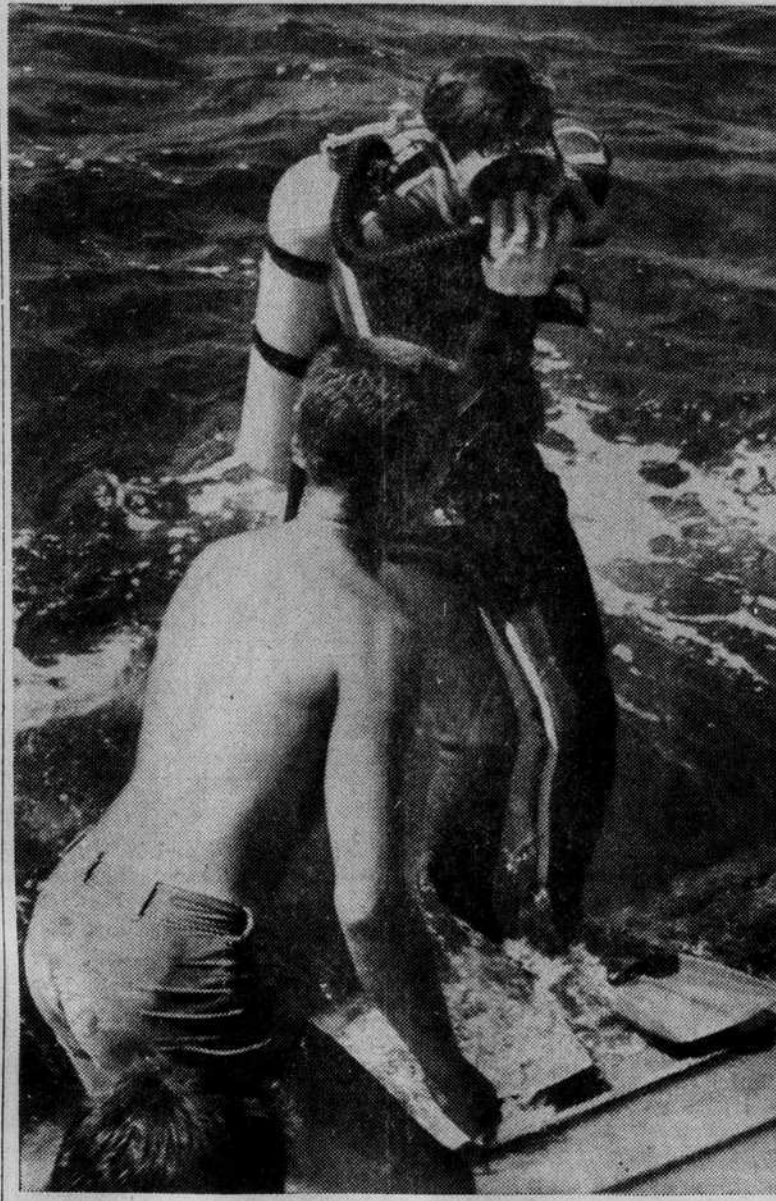
a neighbor. "I didn't have any money," Johnson said, "so I worked a deal to work for him in garden to pay for the gun." Johnson said that he cleaned the gun and has it in good shape. "I've even fired it," he said proudly.

It may be many a day before one of the weapons recovered during the past weekend is in shape for firing, but they are now in the hands of specialists in the matter of preservation and preservation of objects brought up from the ocean's depths.

Whether this will turn out to be an interesting side trip for an army group in this area on a routine mission or whether it will open up new and exciting frontiers of underwater exploration remains to be seen. But the fact has been established that the cargo of some of the Confederate blockade runners remains relatively intact.

The U.S. Navy put in at the

### "Geronimo" ...



... or whatever it is you say when you dive in a SCUBA rig. Here one of the men starts down for another look at the sunken wreck of the Confederate blockade runner Ranger.

municipal dock in Southport Sunday afternoon to take on supplies before departing for the return trip to Fort Eustis, but several

### West Coast Trip Includes Side Visit To Honolulu And Hawaii

Miss Britie Holden of Shallotte has returned from an extensive tour of the Western States, including Hawaii.

She and two of her friends with whom she teaches in Leesburg, Florida, left there July 4 for California. En route they saw the Painted Desert, Petrified Forest, Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam and

Las Vegas, where they attended the Red Skelton Show.

After arriving in Los Angeles, they spent several days with Mr. and Mrs. Elbert H. Gray and took several tours of Los Angeles, Hollywood, Santa Monica, Long Beach and Burbank.

The itinerary called for a trip to Seattle and Alaska but was

## Waterfront

This seems to be the summer for photogenic sea turtles, for already we have had access to good closeup pictures of these huge denizens of the deep taken by too local photographers. We used one a couple of weeks ago taken by Rees Swan over on Bald Head Island. This week we saw another set of good pictures that had been taken by Dan L. Walker of Long Beach. Each also had a shot of youngsters burrowing in the sand in search of turtle eggs. But the crowning assignment was turned in by Walker Sunday. When asked why he hadn't done something he was supposed to do during the weekend, Walker's lame excuse was, "I was watching a turtle nest, waiting for the eggs to hatch so I could get a first-minute picture of the little turtles." and you know something, we think he probably was doing just that!

Speaking of Dan Walker, he has his hands full planning for the forthcoming N. C. Crab Derby, scheduled for Long Beach on Saturday, August 25. Dan'l is an idea man of the first magnitude, and he has tried to come up with some new ideas for sidelights to the main event. One of these is a crab-catching contest, limited to kids 12-years-of-age. Another is a crab relay race, limited to little boys, with the object being to pass a live crab instead of a baton. And he was trying to think up some details of how to have a contest for men, the object being to reach a hand into a simulated king crab nest and pick up a live crab without looking. Somehow, we just cannot see this latter competition drawing many contestants, since to catch a crab is perilous enough when you are looking him straight in the eye.

Ed Royal went on a photographic mission Sunday with the Army boys aboard the LCU that was operating at the site of the wreck of the blockade runner Ranger off Holden Beach. Ed got some good action pictures, but that was not all. When the landing craft came out of the intra-coastal waterway and into the Cape Fear river, Ed got them to make a wide turn to the city dock so he could snap a shot of the Southport waterfront—a picture that is long overdue for a brochure being planned by the Southport Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Upon returning to the mainland the tour was continued to a more Northern route. A few points of interest were Yosemite National Park, Great Salt Flats, Salt Lake City, Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Tetons.

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