

# **D/V TENACIOUS**

ATLANTIC WRECK SALVAGE, L.L.C.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **D/V TENACIOUS DISCOVERS SUBMARINE OFF DELMARVA PENINSULA**

December 10, 2020 – Atlantic Wreck Salvage (AWS), owner and operator of *D/V Tenacious*, announced today the discovery of a submarine off the Delmarva Peninsula. The vessel has yet to be dived and visually identified, but based on side scan sonar data, the location, and the historical record, the team firmly believes it to be the wreckage of the *R-8 (S.S. 85)*, an American submarine dispatched by experimental aerial bomb testing in 1936. The discovery is historically important because *R-8* is one of few American submarines resting in diveable East Coast waters that had yet to be located.

The *R-8* was one of 27 R-class submarines commissioned by the U.S. Navy during WW1, but she was not completed until after the Armistice. She was built in 1918 by Fore River Shipbuilding in Quincy, Massachusetts, a shipyard that built many of the U.S. Navy's destroyers and early submarines. *R-8* transited the Panama Canal, became a part of the Pacific Fleet, and participated in Naval training off the coasts of California and the Gulf of Mexico. In 1923, she sailed west to Pearl Harbor where she participated in training and operations with fleet units for the next eight years. In 1927, *R-8* searched for pilots who had gone missing during the Dole Air Race, the first airplane race from California to Hawaii. *R-8* was called back to the East Coast in 1930 and became part of the Inactive Naval Reserve Fleet at Philadelphia. She sank in the Navy Yard on February 26, 1936, was raised in April, struck from the Navy list in May, and used as a target in an aerial bombing test in August. Four near misses with 100 lb. bombs ultimately sent her to the bottom of the ocean and sealed her fate.

“The sonar data leaves little doubt that the *R-8* has been located,” said world-renown sonar expert Garry Kozak of GK Consulting, who analyzed sonar data with the team. “The submarine in the image is the correct length, width, and height. One set of prominent features of the R-class subs visible in the scan image is the spray rail configuration on the conning tower.”

Shipwreck historian, author, and wreck hunter Captain Eric Takakjian and *D/V Tenacious* Captain Joe Mazraani have been working on the *R-8* Project for many years. In 2020, when AWS acquired side scan sonar capabilities, Mazraani moved *D/V Tenacious* from her home port in Point Pleasant, New Jersey to Ocean City, Maryland to conduct searches for *R-8*'s remains. Captain Ted Green assisted the team by providing information about potential targets he gathered throughout his years captaining his dive boat, *OC Diver*. Veteran wreck diver Mark Nix, who dove with Green on *OC Diver* and now dives with *D/V Tenacious*, was an integral part of the search team.

“The discovery of any new vessel is exciting,” said Captain Takakjian, who has discovered more than seventy shipwrecks in his career. “It appears from the sonar images that the site will reveal a very well-preserved example of an R-class submarine in existence anywhere. We are looking forward to conducting additional research and to diving the wreck in 2021.”

At this time, the team is not releasing additional information about the depth or the location of the vessel until they can dive the wreckage and make a formal identification. Side Scan Sonar images reveal that the vessel is intact and sits upright on the ocean floor. The images were acquired with a Klein System 3000. Joseph St. Amand subsequently processed the sonar data using SonarWiz from Chesapeake Technology so the team could compare the vessel on the ocean floor with historical photographs and plans of the *R-8*.

This is not the first submarine discovered by *D/V Tenacious*. In 2012, the team discovered the remains of *U-550*, the last U-boat thought to remain in diveable North Atlantic waters. *R-8* discovery team members Kozak, Mazraani, Tom Packer, and Takakjian were all part of the *U-550* discovery team.

Members of the *R-8* discovery team include: Captain Eric Takakjian, Captain Ted Green, Garry Kozak, Mark Nix, Tom Packer, Christopher Ogden, Jack Lawniczuk, Joseph St. Amand, Jennifer Sellitti, and Captain Joe Mazraani.

### **About Atlantic Wreck Salvage and D/V Tenacious**

Atlantic Wreck Salvage (AWS) is a New Jersey-based company that conducts operations in the North Atlantic. *D/V Tenacious* is the vessel from which AWS’ crew locates, dives, and salvages shipwrecks. *D/V Tenacious* and her crew have discovered numerous wrecks in the waters off the coast of New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, the most celebrated of which is *U-550*, the last German U-boat known to rest in diveable North Atlantic waters. *D/V Tenacious* and her expeditions have been chronicled in the books “Where Divers Dare: The Hunt for the Last U-boat,” “Dangerous Shallows, In Search of the Ghost Ships of Cape Cod,” and in dive publications worldwide. The vessel is owned by Atlantic Wreck Salvage, L.L.C. and operated by Joe Mazraani and Jennifer Sellitti. When they are not at sea, Joe and Jennifer work as criminal defense attorneys in New Jersey.

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### **Photos**

1. Side scan sonar image of *R-8* on the sea floor – 75m range
2. Side scan sonar image with feature analysis – 75m range
3. Side scan sonar image with feature analysis of conning tower spray rails – 100m range
4. Historical photo of *R-8*
5. Members of the discovery team moments after locating *R-8*, left to right: Joseph St. Amand, Mark Nix, Jennifer Sellitti, Captain Joe Mazraani
6. Members of the discovery team on a search trip for *R-8*, left to right: Tom Packer, Captain Joe Mazraani, Jennifer Sellitti, Captain Eric Takakjian
7. Discovery team members Jack Lawniczuk (left) and Chris Ogden prepare for a dive during an *R-8* search trip
8. Chris Ogden (left) and Jack Lawniczuk prepare for a dive during an *R-8* search trip
9. Naval photograph of several R-class submarines, including *R-8*
10. Mark Nix (left) and Joe Mazraani discuss search operations aboard *D/V Tenacious*