Diving on the *Queen Anne's Revenge*

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Abstract

First located in November 1996, the shipwreck of the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, the pirate Blackbeard's flagship, has become an international interdisciplinary research project. Archaeologists, scientists, and historians have collaborated under the direction of the North Carolina Underwater Archaeology Branch to analyze the shipwreck: identifying the extent of the site, assessing the condition of the cultural remains, studying the historical and modern environmental conditions of the area, evaluating potential impacts to site preservation, researching historical documentation, and collecting archaeological data.

Diving operations were an integral part of accomplishing or initiating much of the scientific research. Divers using open circuit SCUBA and wireless communication conducted detailed mapping, photography, videography, excavation, artifact recovery, and remote sensing.

A major educational initiative that was an overwhelming success was the *QAR DiveLive*, a distance education event primarily made possible through the professional expertise of Nautilus Productions and Marine Graphics. For one week during both the fall 2000 and the fall 2001 field expeditions, live underwater video was transmitted to a shore facility that digitized the signal and uploaded it to the Internet.

While any Internet user could watch and listen to the divers at work underwater, registered school groups and museums could email questions that were relayed from shore to the site to be answered live by the support team on board the research vessel and/or the divers working underwater. DiveLive reached thousands of school children and countless viewers across the country and around the world, allowing them to participate firsthand in scientific diving as part of an underwater archaeological investigation.