

# Site of 1910 Shipwreck off the Coast of Delaware Identified



In 1910, the Navy steamer tug known as the USS *Nina* sank off the coast of Delaware and Maryland with more than 30 people aboard. Since that time, the official location of the shipwreck has remained a mystery. Now, thanks to a joint effort by the University of Delaware, the U.S. Navy and SEARCH, the site has been confirmed. This expedition helps bring peace to the descendants of those who

were lost on that day and allows the Navy to begin the process of protecting this watery grave site.

Art Trembanis, professor at the [College of Earth, Ocean and Environment](#) (CEOE), said the joint effort came about through years of friendships and personal collaborations, as well as the stars aligning to allow for the search to take place.

Having just received a new autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV), Trembanis was looking for ways to test it out on the water. He spoke with Jim Delgado, senior vice president of [SEARCH](#), a leading U.S.-based cultural resource management company, and Delgado told him about the USS *Nina*.

Trembanis also had a group of United States Naval Academy students, known as midshipmen (Mids), interning with him at CEOE's [School of Marine Science and Policy](#) at the same time. Since 2015, 18 Mids from the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) have come to UD and participated in a summer instructional internship through an Educational Partnership Agreement (EPA) between UD and the USNA. Many of these students have gone on to incorporate their skills and experiences into senior capstone projects.

"Those things aligned and I said: 'Well, instead of having a make-believe type of mission, why don't we have an honest-to-goodness, real, challenging expedition to exercise the vehicle and help address a Navy site and long-standing mystery?' I thought it would be something for our students to chew on and give them something to lead and execute."



UD doctoral student Mark Lundine prepares an autonomous underwater vehicle to perform side-scan sonar and camera mapping of the USS 'Nina' site. (Courtesy: University of Delaware)

## Hands-on Experience

With their mission set to carry out the investigation, the UD students got to work coordinating with the team members from SEARCH and the midshipmen. Trembanis made it clear that they had all the resources from their lab available to them, including AUVs, aerial drones and remotely operated vehicle (ROV) systems.

[Read the full story here](#)