



Search for 1814 wreck suspended for now

Published: Aug. 10, 2010 at 7:42 PM

ANNAPOLIS, Md., Aug. 10 (UPI) -- Maryland archaeologists have ended a three-week search for the flagship of a fleet of gunboats scuttled in the Patuxent River during the War of 1812.

The Scorpion, a 50-foot barge converted to a warship of sorts by adding four guns, was commanded by Commodore Joshua Barney, a Maryland man who put together a small fleet of shallow-draft vessels to harass the British Royal Navy, The Baltimore Sun reported Tuesday. Barney ordered the boats sunk in 1814 near a place named Pig Point and then led his men overland to join the U.S. forces preparing for the Battle of Bladensburg.

Two archaeologists located what is believed to be the Scorpion in 1980 about 20 miles southwest of Annapolis.

This year, state agencies put together \$200,000 for a three-week survey. Archaeologists hope to raise the wreck by 2012.

"It truly is a literal time capsule, and 200 years would be a perfect time to open this time capsule," Julie Schablitsky, chief archaeologist of the state Highway Administration, said. "This is a prime opportunity to garner support and enthusiasm for what we believe will be a very symbolic object to the entire state of Maryland."