

Vamar
Take an Underwater Tour
Audio Transcripts

Bow

We begin at the iron bitt, also called a bollard, which was a post mounted on the ship's bow that was used for fastening down thick mooring ropes and cables.

When *Vamar* settled in 25 ft. of water she came to rest on her port side. As we continue along portside of the vessel we find ourselves swimming up to the remains of the bow.

Here is the fair-lead, which was the hole or thimble on the top of the bow that helped to guide and pass the dock lines. Today the fair-lead looks like the letter "C" but before the vessel collapsed it was shaped more like the letter "U."

Here we see what remains of her starboard side.

Another feature that helps archaeologists identify that this is the bow of the vessel is this large pile of anchor chain.

We also see the support system lying on the sea floor. These rib-like frames helped support the iron hull.

The wreck of *Vamar* contains a rare find, an intact bilge keel. This keel was put in place to help stabilize the steamer and help reduce its tendency to roll back and forth. Interestingly, one of the nicknames for *Eleanor Bolling* was EVERMORE ROLLING.

Midships

As we swim amongst the remains of the shipwreck we see pieces of the steel hull angled into the sand.

As you can see, a variety of marine life lives and plays throughout the historic site.

In the mid section is an octopus-looking iron feature which we think is the location of the ship's boiler. It is built with very heavy iron plates and components that are twisted and unrecognizable today. This is because the site was dynamited by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prevent the ship from being a hazard to navigation.

The collapsed steel hull, protruding frames, deck beams, and engine components attract more than just your friendly diver and interested historian, these vessel remains also attract much larger species of marine life such as the sea turtle. We know that sea turtles frequent this site because of the bright orange color seen here. This is an example of a turtle rubbing station, where turtles come to scratch and clean their shells. They find iron close to the sand so they can

use the sea bed to push against. This rubbing causes a new layer of iron to rust, and thus the orange color.

Unlike the Sea Turtle, the Goliath Grouper seen here is a residential species. This fish can grow up to six feet in length and is the largest fish living at this site.

Stern

Steering a large, 170 foot long vessel, 30 foot in beam and with 16 foot in depth of hold, was no easy task, however this piece of equipment made the task easier. What we see here is the quadrant, an iron arc which allowed a steering cable to be passed through an alley, across the curve of the metal. This line could pull the tiller, or arm of the rudder post, port or starboard, depending on which way the helmsman wanted the vessel to go. As you can see, the forged iron quadrant is still attached to the rudder post.

Here is the rudder. This flat piece of iron was attached to the stern with hinges, known as gudgeons and pintles. The rudder operates by redirecting the water past the hull which thus, turns the boat.

Although the propeller is no longer visible, we see here the remains of the propeller shaft which connected the transmission inside the vessel to the propeller.

As we follow the diver, we swim along the starboard side of the vessel and see the shaft alley which was a passage extending from the engine room to the stern of the vessel, containing the propeller shaft. The small window in the video shows you the holes cut into the alley to support the propeller shaft.

On the other side of the shaft alley is the engine room. Here we see elements of the triple expansion steam engine which had three cylinders: a high pressure, an intermediate pressure, and a low pressure cylinder.

We also see the main engine shaft, connecting rods, and thrust bearings which linked the propeller shaft to the engine, creating the power to move the vessel.

Swimming through the site you can see that over the years a whole myriad of sealife has taken up living on and throughout *Vamar*, it really is an underwater aquarium, a living Museum in the sea.