Is This One of the Monitor’s “Water Closets”?

During the period July 12 through July 19, the Cambrian Foundation conducted a private research expedition to the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. Their objectives were to obtain photographs and video of the wreck, to assist in ongoing research, to take measurements to evaluate the rate of collapse and to assist in future attempts to recover major components of the wreck, and to recover two objects that had been located during the 1998 Monitor Expedition but had not been mapped.

On July 15, after documentation had been completed, we set up the first of the two toilets, a modified Cambrian diver. The Monitor had four water closets, which were the first to be designated as flushing toilets to be installed on a vessel. The two of the toilets, one in the captain's quarters and one for the other officers, were in the forward section of the ship, and two were located near the ship's crew. This object was recovered from the area indicated on plans of the Monitor as being the location of the officer’s toilet.

The difficulty in determining whether the object is actually one of the toilets lies in the fact that the object is not complete, and that a large portion of it is badly corroded iron. The corrosion prevents a detailed study of the object until it has been cleaned through the conservation process.

While the addition of flushing toilets to the Monitor was probably viewed by the officers and crew as a tremendous improvement to their difficult shipboard lives, the mechanisms could be tricky to operate. William C. Church, in his two-volume biography of John Ericsson, described an incident in which the ship's surgeon, during his use of the officer’s water closet, failed to observe the proper sequence of operation and literally became afloat. It is no wonder that some of the later monikers still had “portable water closets,” consisting of a bucket or shell jammed into a canvas curtain around it, or on the decks.

We will report more on this object in future issues of Cheesedix.

From the Pilot House

What a year this has been for the Monitor! We initiated a new comprehensive preservation plan, conducted engineering, geotechnical and archaeological surveys at the Sanctuary, and obtained commitments for continued research in 1999.

The previous Cheesedix (Dec. 1997) described NOAAs draft comprehensive, long-range preservation plan for the Monitor, "Charting a New Course for the Monitor." After public comments were incorporated, we finalized the plan and submitted it to Congress in April 1998. The plan outlines a six-phase strategy for stabilizing the Monitor’s hull and recovering key components for preservation, long-term curation and exhibitions. Response to the plan has been very positive, and NOAA is moving ahead with implementation.

As described in this issue’s lead article, the 1998 Monitor Expedition completed Phase I of the long-range plan by pre-surveying areas and mapping and, in addition, accomplished the recovery of the Monitor’s propeller and shaft. We can adequately convey the admiration and gratitude we feel toward the U.S. Navy’s Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two (MDSU Two). The MDSU Two team and their commanding officer, CDR Chris Murray, were absolutely outstanding. For once the weather cooperated, too, giving us the opportunity we needed to demonstrate the effectiveness of combined Navy/NOAA dive operations. Both the Navy and NOAA dive teams set new records, logging more dive hours on the Monitor this year than during all previous NOAA expeditions. Both the NOAA team, comprised of government, university and private divers, was a model partnership for the application of cutting-edge diving technology on a deep-water site. The Mariners’ Museum, always a key partner, arranged to pick up the artifacts from the Navy and to get them into conservation treatment in a remarkably short time. Visitors to the Museum can see the objects in treatment, and this has proven to be a popular exhibit.

We are hoping to reassure the same teams for the 1999 Monitor Expedition, so stay in touch as we continue our effort to insure that the Monitor will not be lost to future generations.

John Brogdon, Manager

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Funding by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration

SUCCESS!

A long last Mother Nature cooperated, making the 1998 Monitor Expedition perhaps the most successful of NOAAs efforts to date. All of the primary goals were met and on June 5 the Monitor’s propeller, the object of an unsuccessful recovery effort in 1995, broke the surface of the water for the first time since the ship was in the Washington Navy Yard in October 1862. The U.S. Navy, the National Undersea Research Center, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, the Cambrian Foundation, and The Mariners’ Museum all contributed to the success of the mission, which was the first phase of a long-range preservation plan submitted to Congress in April of this year.

As has been reported in previous issues of Cheesedix, NOAA is confronting a serious management problem at the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary: the collapse of the Monitor’s hull is imminent. NOAA prepared and submitted the long-range preservation plan in draft form last year and in final form earlier this year. The 1998 expedition was a crucial element in the preservation plan, which recommends a combination of reshoring the wreck and recovering major components. The mapping goals in the 1998 expedition were designed to provide engineering data required for developing detailed plans for stabilizing the Monitor’s hull and for recovery of components that may include the Monitor’s engine and turret.

The goals, activities and results of the 1998 Monitor Expedition are the essential elements in NOAAs comprehensive long-range preservation plan for the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. Expedition goals were designed to generate a wide range of archaeological and engineering data needed to develop a detailed plan for stabilization of the hull and recovering selected objects from the site.

The primary goals of the 1998 Monitor Expedition included:

Goal 1: Document, through drawings, measurements and photography, the overall configuration of the hull, from above and from both sides; the stem, particularly the propeller, shaft, screw, and all debris field; the turret and its area of contact with the inverted hull; the lower hull, machinery space, engine and boilers; the hull forward of the mizzenmast bulkhead; and the area beneath the hull.

Goal 2: Map and recover exposed artifacts that may be damaged or destroyed by the action of currents, the collapse of portions of the hull, or by the planned hull-shoring activities.

Goal 3: Excavate and provide for inside and at the base of the turret in an effort to locate the guns and other contents and to identity obstructions at the base of the turret.

Goal 4: Excavate and map the stern debris field and attempt to locate the rudder, move all material to a safe area to the northeast of the wreck, recover the rudder, if practicable.

Goal 5: Recover data from the current meter placed at the site in 1997, and replace the current meter for additional data collection.

Secondary goals included:

* Goal 6: Install the permanent mapping datasets installed in 1997, replace as necessary, and measure the distances between those datasets.
The goals, activities and results of the 1998 Monitor Expedition are essential elements in NOAA's comprehensive long-range preservation plan for the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary.

During Phase I NOAA divers conducted dives on twenty-seven of thirty possible dives. A total of ninety dives were conducted, fifty-five by the U.S. Navy and thirty-five by the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. The expedition logged a total of 186 hours cumulative bottom time, nearly twice the fifty-hour limit of all previous NOAA diving expeditions to the Monitor. This was necessary to complete the expedition's cumulative diving time of 625 hours.

On June 5, the Monitor's four-bladed iron propeller was successfully raised, along with an 11-foot section of shaft. The Navy dive team recovered the propeller without damage. On June 10 the propeller assembly was transported aboard the Kielhoef to Newport News Stainless for cleaning, welding and spraying. On June 12 the propeller was returned to the Monitor's Museum, where it will reside for safekeeping. On June 5 divers also retrieved a 127-foot long anchor from the Monitor's stern. In July the anchor was brought aboard the Kielhoef and was eventually returned to the Museum of American History.

On July 21 the Monitor took on 128 long tons of ballast water and was towed back to the Kielhoef. On July 23, after initial examination, the ship was made fast to the Monitor. No new findings were noted. The Monitor was towed back to the Kielhoef on July 24.

The Monitor's hull and turret are currently undergoing a major restoration at the Charleston Shipyard in Charleston, South Carolina. The Monitor will be the first ship to be restored in this manner, and the restoration process will take several years. The Monitor will be open to the public once the restoration is complete.

The Monitor Expedition continued to explore the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. The expedition's goals were to recover key components of the Monitor's hull and turret, and to conduct archaeological investigations to better understand the history of the Monitor and its role in the American Civil War.

The expedition's final report, "The Monitor Expedition: A Comprehensive Investigation of the USS Monitor," is scheduled for publication in the spring of 2000. The report will provide a detailed account of the expedition's findings and will be available for public review.
25th Anniversary of the Location of the Wreck of the USS Monitor

On March 8, 1748, John G. Newton, marine superintendent for the oceanography program at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Laboratory in Beaufort, North Carolina, made the long-awaited announcement that five months of analysis of the shipwreck and historical records had confirmed discovery of the wreck of the USS Monitor.

The Monitor was described as “lying in 200 feet of water on a hard sand and shellstone floor.” The Monitor’s keel, which fell off during the battle, was found. The historical records and the shipwreck’s construction were confirmed.

In search of the Monitor, the Eastward had swept a 5-mile-by-14-mile sector of the Atlantic. The mission was successful with advanced scientific gear, much of it designed by Dr. Harold Edgerton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Newton said the search area was determined by exploiting the track of the Rhode Island as she rendezvoused with the Eastward. Between 1888 and 1916, many ships were turned into the Bogue Inlet, described by marine of the time as the “Gateway of the American.” An 1857 survey chart helped determine the limits of the search area.

Joining Newton as co-investigators in the mission were Newfane County search and recovery operations, Watts, and Dr. Robert E. Shipp, a geologist from the University of Delaware. More than 60 persons aboard the Eastward and 40 support vessels took part in the search.

During the first week of April 1974, a second cruise to the site was made to the purpose of obtaining complete photographic and television tape records of the site. The project utilized the ultra-sophisticated research vessel Alca Seaquest, which was specifically designed for deep-sea research and recovery operations.

The 243-foot Seaquest was designed to search, core, drill, and sample mineral deposits in depth up to 10,000 feet and had capability of recovering 200-ton loads from depths of 4,000 feet. The Seaquest’s dynamic positioning capabilities, which were necessary to hover over the Monitor without the use of anchors, facilitated the conduct of operations at the site.

The dynamic positioning capability was the result of the ship’s unique propulsion system. The Seaquest was equipped with two identical Valth/Schneider cycloidal propellers located in the bow and stern of the ship. The force of these propellers could be directed 360 degrees, enabling the Seaquest to move sideways as well as forward or backward.

The Seaquest was also fitted out with a search “pool,” complete with side and forward-looking sonar for search and obstacle avoidance. Television cameras with flood lights for illumination of targets, and two deep-view 3-mm cameras with strobe lights for detailed recording of targets. The search pool was lowered on a 4-1/2-inch-diameter oil-drill pipe through a large central well at midships in the Seaquest’s hull.

Once the Seaquest had located the wreck of the Monitor, scientists began a systematic examination of the wreck site with the ship’s search pool. The search pool was tracked by an acoustic beacon placed on the bottom near the site. Signals from this beacon were picked up by multiple microphones on the hull of the Seaquest. This information was projected three-dimensionally to a computer in the Seaquest’s control room.

The Monitor’s search area was designated by the Secretary of the Navy as the nation’s first marine sanctuary. The Monitor Sanctuary is reserved to the only National Marine Sanctuary designed specifically to protect a cultural, rather than a natural, resource.

The title for this feature is from a poem written by Norman G. Cuddeback during the 25th anniversary of the 1974 Alca Seaquest expedition to the Monitor. Cuddeback was the first Marine who arrived on the Monitor, on which he served as captain’s steward, ship’s no. 18. As of November 6 and 7, 1974, Cuddeback was the commanding officer, and on the latter date he was promoted to ship’s cook. He remained in command until December 31, 1974. Cuddeback was awarded the USN Krocik in Charleston Harbor in April 1974. He was listed as the ship’s cook. He was discharged in the receiving ship Boston. (Krocik on May 20, 1974.)

Cuddeback’s grave notice has stated that Cuddeback’s grave is located at the time of the battle with the Virginia in 1862. He was the captain’s steward. Cuddeback gave his father a marble tombstone which he claimed was used on the Monitor.

The title card, which has “Monitor” in golden embossed, was donated by David Cuddeback to the War Memorial Museum in Newport News, Virginia, where it is currently on exhibit.

If you are a descendant of David Cuddeback, we would like to hear from you.

Sustainable Seas Expeditions

A project of the National Geographic Society, in partnership with NOAA’s National Marine Sanctuary and made possible by the Richard & Rhoda Goldman Foundation.

In April 1998 the National Geographic Society, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Richard & Rhoda Goldman Foundation announced an expedition mission for the oceans. For the next five years, a project of deepwater exploration and public education in NOAA’s National Marine Sanctuaries. The twelve sanctuaries conserve, protect, and enhance the biodiversity, ecological, integrity, and cultural legacy of the nation’s marine environments. Ranging from American Samoa to New England, they include Pacific and Atlantic haunts of whales, sea lions, sharks, rays, and turtles; significant coral reefs and help-formed habitats; and the remnants of the Civil War ironclad USS Monitor off the coast of North Carolina.

Dr. Sylvia Earle, National Geographic Society Explorer-in-Residence, will lead the expeditions to the twelve marine sanctuaries, using the ship National Geographic Explorer. Designed Deep Water, a one-person submersible capable of exploring to depths of 2,000 feet. This innovative sub- merisible technology will enable the expedition to:

- Undertake the first sustained exploration of the sanctuary system to depths of 2,000 feet;
- Photodocument the natural history of each sanctuary’s plants and animals;
- Establish the first permanent marine monitoring network in the marine sanctuaries.

Ultimately, through opportunities for ground-breaking explorations, compelling images and video, and public involvement, Sustainable Seas Expeditions is designed to generate greater public awareness of the value and need for in turn increased conservation of our oceans.

Beginning in April 1999, Sustainable Seas Expeditions will conduct research on the submersible DeepWorker manned submersibles. These small, maneuverable submersibles provide the gift of an up close and real-time look at life in the ocean using conventional means, even within normal diving range. By their space-like nature, these small submersibles will allow direct and honest appreciation of the ocean environment.

The project will be divided into two phases: A) Photodocumentation project and B) Public Involvement project. The first phase will be a 9-month project from April 1999 to November 1999. The second phase will be a 6-month project from December 1999 to May 2000.

The purpose of the expeditions will be to increase ocean awareness and appreciation, to bring new information to the public, and to inspire the public to take action.

“With the potential of new discoveries beckoning and a national commitment to assess and understand our oceans, the Sustainable Seas Expeditions promise exciting viewing for the next five years.”

The National Marine Sanctuaries Accomplishments Report for 1998 is now available from the Monitor Sanctuary Office. This is a comprehensive report of the activities at twelve National Marine Sanctuaries and includes some visually stunning images. It is available by requesting for information for student reports on the oceans and the various resources found within our marine protected areas.

The report by the beginning of the 1999 school year, The Mariners’ Museum, with assistance from the Monitor Sanctuary office, will have an online version of the Monitor curriculum up and running. The curriculum will offer something for all ages—students and adults—and will include about 100 pages of text as well as approximately 100 images, both historical and modern.

As part of the curriculum, the new Monitor Bibliography will be put on line. A limited number of hard copies will be printed, most of which will be made available to universities and research libraries to make the great resources available to a wider audience.

The Monitor staff can be provided with material on the Monitor for classroom use for individuals with specific research interests. Copies of documents and images from the Collection can also be provided.

Monitors can be seen in the permanent Monitor exhibit at The Mariners’ Museum in Newport News, VA, as well as at the Monitor Museum at the Mariners’ Museum in New London, CT.

A variety of material on the Monitor is available from the Monitor Sanctuary office, including back issues of Cheesepoke, a newsletter of the Monitor, publications of the Monitor’s curatorial staff, will have an online version of the Monitor curriculum up and running, an information book on the Monitor and the Monitor Sanctuary, and various brochures. This material is excellent for classroom use and will be provided on request.
1998 *Monitor* Expedition

The propeller rests in its cradle aboard the *Kellie Coueset* (photo by Cynthia W. Creamer, the Cambrian Foundation).

A heavy crane lifts the propeller into the conservation tank to begin a three-to-five-year process. The conservation area is open to the public (photo courtesy of The Mariners' Museum).

Is this the Monitor's officers' "water closet" or toilet? Hopefully the early stages of conservation will reveal details that will answer this question (photo courtesy of The Mariners' Museum).

The propeller sits under a sprinkler system awaiting conservation at The Mariners' Museum (photo courtesy of The Mariners' Museum).

One of the propeller's three broken blades is visible as the propeller sits in the conservation tank during an examination by a conservator (photo courtesy of The Mariners' Museum).

Some of the special guests who visited the 1996 Monitor Expedition.

Noaa and Cambrian Foundation divers situate themselves on the elevator on the stern of the *Kellie Coueset*. The elevator takes the divers about 20 feet below the surface, where they begin their free descent to the Monitor.

Navy personnel prepare the dive platform for deployment over the side of the *Kellie Coueset*.

Navy divers prepare for another dive on the Monitor.

The Navy's dive platforms and two divers prepare to descend the 220 feet to the Monitor.
Norcross Family Papers Donated to the Monitor Collection

On September 1, 1998, at a ceremony at The Mariners’ Museum, Mrs. William Norcross and Ms. Donna Schaefer donated the Norcross Family Papers to NOAA’s Monitor Collection. The papers are primarily those of their great-grandfather, Joseph Norcross. They include water colors of ships designed by Joseph Norcross, patent certificates and drawings, and correspondence from various individuals and government officials, including Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles.

Some of the vessels designed by Joseph Norcross were similar to the monitor-type vessels built by the U.S. Navy during, and after the Civil War. The November 1862 “monitor” appears to have a cataracta-type hull and two rounded turrets. According to a newspaper article contained in the collection, the design for this ship was submitted to the Navy in mid-1861 but the plans apparently disappeared. While Joseph Norcross did build a vessel in the 1880s, it is not known if it was on the order of his tunneled- vessel design.

Patents were issued to Joseph Norcross for blocks and tackles and other vessel-related items. The Norcross Family Papers contain the patent documents, complete with official seals and ribbons, and detailed engineering drawings of the inventions. The Norcross Family donated the papers to the Monitor Collection to recognize their great-grandfather’s contribution to ship design and his foresight in conceiving a monitor-type vessel. Condition assessments of the documents and accessioning into the Monitor Collection have been completed and the papers are now available for research.

In 1998, a new edition of the Monitor Collection is curated by The Mariners’ Museum and contains historical documents and information as well as all of the scientific data that has been generated by NOAA-sponsored research on the wreck of the Monitor. The scientific data includes photographs, video footage, and technical reports on NOAA’s various expeditions. All artifacts recovered from the Monitor Sanctuary are also part of the Monitor Collection and are curated by the Mariners. Many of the artifacts are included in a permanent Monitor exhibit at the Museum.

The Mariners’ Museum serves as the Principal Museum for the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary and has been a partner in the last three expeditions to the Monitor Sanctuary, including the 1998 expedition which resulted in the recovery of the Monitor’s propeller. The propeller and other artifacts recovered during the 1998 field season are currently undergoing conservation at the Museum (see lead article in this issue).

Environmental Hero

On May 22, 1998, Oceaneering of Upper Mattaponi, Maryland, received the “Environmental Hero Award” from NOAA for assistance in developing the long-range preservation plan for the Monitor. Oceaneering submitted to Congress earlier this year. The award was presented by John D. Broadwater, manager of the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, to Oceaneering Technologies OTECH, Inc., along with a letter from Vice President Al Gore which states in part: “President Teddy Roosevelt once said, ‘Conservation is a great moral issue, for it involves the patriotic duty of insuring the safety and continuance of the nation.’ By volunteering your time and energy, you are part of that continuance legacy. This award appropriately recognizes your efforts.”

In 1997, the Office of the Director of Oceanic Operations and Science and NOAA’s Corporation approached OTECH to develop a plan for the emergency stabilization and preservation of the Monitor and recovery of major components of the wreck. A team of OTECH engineers and divers, including Don Craig, Ken Edwards, Mark VanVeenhoven, Leonard Whitehead and Steve Wright, conducted trade-off studies to define the best recovery method and developed budgetary costs. A preliminary plan was submitted to NOAA and SUPA/SNV and incorporated into the long-range preservation plan.

They carry the message that oceans, just as much as our nation’s land, need help and deserve our respect. In late 1997 the immense impact of the ocean on humankind captured the world’s attention in a strong El Niño affected weather around the globe. This and other events such as toxic algal blooms sounded an alarm that leads urgently to the United Nations’ declaration of 1998 as the Year of the Ocean. As we prepare for a new century the Sanctuary Program continues to provide leadership in this growing ocean ethic of marine conservation. In 1997, the National Marine Sanctuary program celebrated its 25th anniversary in events held around the country. From the halls of Capitol Hill to the shores of Monterey Bay, the sanctuaries showcased their long history of coastal stewardship and marine sustainability and outlined their goals for the twenty-first century.

In February 1997, Governor Lawton Chiles and his cabinet signed the law that brought Florida state waters into the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. In June 1997, Governor Benjamin Cayetano approved the final designation of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, protecting the winter breeding grounds of the largest Pacific population of the endangered humpback whales.

The yearlong events in 1997—rock concert fund-raisers and designation celebrations, long-term plans for saving a famous Civil War ship, archeological discoveries in the Gray’s Reef Sanctuary—had all carried the message of a new ocean ethic. Americans have long acknowledged the need of a Yellowstone or Glacier national parks; increasingly Americans understand that protection must extend equally to our oceans. Today a growing number of citizens see our national marine sanctuaries as important pieces of the larger mosaic of environmental conservation.

National Marine Sanctuaries and the Year of the Ocean

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Editor’s Corner

A

d yet another year has passed. It seems that 1998 was a good year for the Monitor. The final long-range preservation plan was submitted to Congress, and the first phase of the recommended shoaling and artifact recovery was completed, thanks in part to the long-established cooperation of Mother Nature.

It is hard to believe that 25 years have passed since the wreck of this gallant little ship was located. Many of the individuals who were involved with the Duke University expedition that found the wreck are no longer with us, most notably John Newton, of Duke University and later the Monitor Research and Recovery Foundation, who led the expeditions; and Dr. Harold Edgerton of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who designed the camera system used to locate and photograph the wreck. These men were explorers in the true sense of the word and they are sorely missed.

The Monitor Collection received a noteworthy collection of material in September, as detailed in the article on the Norcross Family Papers in this issue. Our thanks to William Norcross and Donna Schaefer for making these papers available to researchers. We will have a more indepth article on the content of the Norcross papers in the next issue of Oceana.

We would also like to express our appreciation to all of you who have written, called, and emailed for information on the Monitor and the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. We have had a rewarding year in terms of the amount of information we have distributed to students, teachers, researchers, model builders, and interested members of the public. We appreciate your interest and support and hope that you will continue to follow the story of the Monitor as we continue our efforts to preserve this significant part of our past.

And finally, it is a pleasure to have family papers that relate to the Monitor, the CSS Virginia, the Battle of Hampton Roads, or related objects. We would very much like to hear from you. We are particularly interested in hearing if you have any information on the Monitor’s officers or crew. A new study of the men who served aboard the Monitor is in preparation and we are looking for new information to include.
Got a Good Image of the Monitor?

I 

I have a good image of the wreck of the Monitor that you would like to share, we would like to hear from you. The education staff of the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary would like to produce a new sanctuary poster as well as two new bookmarks and other items. We are asking museums, libraries, and those who have visited the Monitor to submit images that they would allow us to use for these products. 

Photos will be examined by Sanctuary and Mariners’ Museum staff, and the one judged the best in terms of clarity and subject matter will be used for the sanctuary poster. Other images will be used for booklets, future issues of Cheseelex, and other education products, with the photographer’s permission. Images will be used only once and the photographer will receive full credit.

The poster photograph will be representative of ongoing research in the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. Private researchers and special use permit applicants who have conducted dives to the Monitor are encouraged to submit photographs for consideration.

1. All images submitted for consideration should be in color 8 x 10 format or transparency.
2. Photographers may enter as many photographs as they wish.
3. Each photograph should be labeled with the photographer’s name, address, telephone number, and appropriate credits.
4. All submissions will be acknowledged in writing within five days of receipt.
5. The photographs will be reviewed by a panel that includes the Monitor sanctuary staff, as well as members of the photography staff and director of the education department of The Mariners’ Museum.
6. Permission may be sought from photographers to use images for booklets, future issues of Cheseelex, and other education products.
7. No photographs will be used for any publication without the express written permission of the photographer.
8. Images should be submitted by March 1, 1999. You will be notified by April 15 of the selection for the new poster.

Myths and Mysteries

This is a new column that will appear periodically to discuss Monitor myths or to share new information that solves or adds to mysteries surrounding the USS Monitor. If you have suggestions for items that might be of interest to our readers, please let us hear from you.

Both the Monitor’s guns are blocked by timbers into “tampions” as stated in Butts’ book. Behind one of the tampions are Butts’ coat and boots, and behind the other tampion the remains of the Monitor’s cat. It was standard procedure for the tamping to be placed in the guns while the guns were not in use, so Butts’ account of drawing the tamping from the guns rings true. However, we have no corroborative evidence for the story’s last part. Other members of the Monitor’s crew wrote articles or gave accounts of the sinking, yet none even mentioned that the Monitor had a ship’s cat, much less that she spent her final moments on the ship trapped in one of the 11-inch Dahlgrens. Several of Butts’ recollections differ, sometimes dramatically, from official reports and other accounts of the sinking. Other

to our knowledge the Monitor’s cat was a ship’s cat, and would have been a source of much attention as an account that concerns the Monitor. This story apparently originated in an article written by Francis Barter, a sailor on the Monitor from November 1862 until the ship sank on December 31, 1862. In an article titled “The Loss of the Monitor” by a Survivor which appeared in Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine, Vol. XXXI (November 1865 to 1866), Butts describes the circumstances surrounding the loss of the Monitor and his own actions that night.

Bailing was now resumed. I occupied the tarp all alone, and passed buckets from the lower hatchway to the man on the top of the tarp. I took off my coat—one that I had received from home only a few days before—so that it could not feel our noble little ship was yet lost—and rolling it up with my boots, drew the tampion from the gun, placed it inside, and replaced the tampion. A black cat was sitting on the bench of one of the guns, howling one of those brave and solemn tones which none can appreciate who is not filled with the superstitions which had been taught by the sailors, who are always afraid to kill a cat. I would almost as soon have touched a ghost, but I caught her, and placing her in another gun, replaced the wall and tampion; but I could still hear that distressing wail. As I raised my last bucket to the upper hatchway no one was there to take it. I scrambled up the ladder and found that we below had been deserted. I shouted to those on the berth-deck, “Come up; the life boat leave the ship, and a boat is along-side.”

Butts’ account leads us to believe that 1) both of the Monitor’s guns are blocked by timbers into “tampions” as stated in Butts’ book. Behind one of the tampions are Butts’ coat and boots, and 3) behind the other tampion the remains of the Monitor’s cat. It was standard procedure for the tamping to be placed in the guns while the guns were not in use, so Butts’ account of drawing the tamping from the guns rings true. However, we have no corroborative evidence for the last part of his story. Other members of the Monitor’s crew wrote articles or gave accounts of the sinking, yet none even mentioned that the Monitor had a ship’s cat, much less that she spent her final moments on the ship trapped in one of the 11-inch Dahlgrens. Several of Butts’ recollections differ, sometimes dramatically, from official reports and other accounts of the sinking. Other


SUCCESS!

...continued from page 2

samples and geotechnical data from the seabed. Among the artifacts recovered were a 10-foot-by-3-foot deck plate that may be the proper well cover; portions of two deck plates, one with an opening that may have been a coal chute; part of a steam engine; and an unidentified object made of iron and brass or bronze. All of these artifacts are currently under-going conservation at The Mariners’ Museum. They are being treated by electrolys, the process used on the Monitor’s anchor which was recovered in 1980. It is estimated that the process and shaft will be in treatment for three to five years. The smaller artifacts will take less time. Progress on the conservation of these artifacts will be reported in future issues of Cheseelex.

In addition to these objects, two artifacts were recovered by a Carnegie Foundation private research expedition in early July: what may be one of the Monitor’s toilets, or water closets as they were called, and the butt plate from a rifle. Articles on each of these artifacts appear elsewhere in this issue.

Also recovered were a bottle fragment similar to one recovered during the 1979 Monitor Expedition, and a portion of a small tin box, the rest of which was recovered by a Carnegie Foundation research expedition a few years ago.

These artifacts are also being conserved at The Mariners’ Museum.

Media coverage of the expedition was extensive. The excellent public television science program NOVA assigned a production team to film the expedition for a one-hour documentary scheduled for the Public Broadcasting System in the spring of 1999. National Geographic sent a photographer to cover a week of the expedition for a possible magazine article; affiliates of all three major network visited the expedition and aired news stories on the expedition; CNN/AOL Airline News covered the site; and because of the interest of John Ericson, Swedish-American designer of the Monitor, a team from Swedish Television visited the site and aired a story in Sweden.

The 1998 Monitor expedition ended on June 26. The data generated by the expedition is currently being analyzed and a final report of the expedition will appear in the next publication. Also, preliminary data from the 1999 Monitor expedition is underway.

These crews mentioned the “bucket brigade” formed in an effort to remove the water that was rushing into the ship, although their stories do not state with Butts’ account; other crewmembers mention diverting themselves of heavy clothing before going to the top of the turret to wait for the rescue boats. Why did no one else mention that the ship’s cat was in the turret that night? And why is there no mention of a cat being aboard the Monitor at any time? “Mousies” on navy ships were common and included chickens or roosters as well as cats and dogs. However, with the exception of the article by Francis Butts, we have found no mention of a mascot or ship’s cat on board the Monitor. Paymaster William Keeler and crewman George Cree wrote frequent letters to their wives, discussing daily meals, meals, weather, and fellow officers and crew. Neither mentioned a ship’s cat.

If the two 11-inch Dahlgrens were recovered from the turret, archaeological evidence may prove—or disprove—Butts’ story. Meanwhile, if any of our readers have information about the Monitor’s cat, we would like to hear from you.

This post card showing the “U.S. Monitor Terror at anchor. New London, Connecticut,” was donated to the Monitor Collection by Jeff Johnston, one of the Monitor Sanctuary’s research assistants.