Manager’s Corner

As you can see from this issue, there has been quite a bit of activity around here. Our office has finally been consolidated, so that Dina and I now share office space on the grounds of The Mariners’ Museum, only a few miles from Hampton Roads where the Monitor and Virginia fought their famous battle. This year’s field project, MARRS ’95 (reported on page 1), was a joint effort by NOAA and the U.S. Navy to recover the Monitor’s propeller. Unfortunately there was never a sufficient till in the seas and bottom currents to permit the recovery, but the Navy has expressed a strong commitment to resume the recovery effort as soon as possible.

More successful were our efforts in education and outreach, especially several new education products and access to the Internet. I am convinced that the Internet’s World Wide Web will continue to grow, becoming one of our most effective means of communication and dissemination of information. In fact, our entire division, the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, is updating and expanding its Internet information. With all this in mind, we are currently developing our own sanctuary “web site” that should be on line in early summer.

During 1996 we are expanding our research and planning activities. Rather than conducting field work, we will use our limited research funds to investigate new advances in marine technology that might open new options for stabilization and recovery of the Monitor or its major components. We hope you will continue to follow our activities and share your opinions and ideas with us as we strive to save as much of the Monitor as possible.

—John Broadwater

Monitor Forum: What Do You Think?

We would like your thoughts and recommendations for the Monitor. As reported in recent issues, NOAA is concerned about increased deterioration of the Monitor. One option under consideration is eventual recovery of major hull components such as machinery and turret, and recovery of the propeller at the earliest opportunity.

Our question for this issue is: What should be NOAA’s policy on recovery of portions of the Monitor?

We would like to hear more from you about relevant issues and ideas. Please feel free to contact us about this or any topic or question by mail or Internet.

Three-Year Special Use Permit Awarded for Non-Research Dives on the Monitor

NOAA’s Sanctuaries and Reserve Division has awarded a three-year special use permit for non-research dives on the Monitor to Captain Arthur Kincher of Dover, NJ, and Hatteras, NC. In 1994 NOAA issued the first special use permit for non-research dives at the sanctuary (see CHEESEBOX VII, September 1995). The success of this pilot project led to NOAA’s decision to continue the program. For more information, contact Captain Kincher at 919-986-2035.

1995 Propeller Recovery Efforts Hampered by Weather

As reported in the last issue (September 1995), NOAA has become increasingly alarmed by the rapid deterioration of the Monitor’s hull observed in recent years. During 1995, in an effort to stabilize the hull, NOAA conducted the Monitor Archaeological Research, Recovery, and Stabilization Mission (MARRS’95) at the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary (MNNM). The primary goal was to help stabilize the wreck by removing and recovering the Monitor’s propeller. Participating with NOAA were the U.S. Navy, The Mariners’ Museum, Key West Divers, Inc., and the National Undersea Research Center/University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Concurrent with the first week of Navy dives, NOAA conducted its own boat diving operations. The Navy salvage ship USS Edenton (ATS-1) served as the research platform for the mission.

MARRS’95 consisted of two segments: one, a NOAA diving reconnaissance operation, the other removal and recovery of the propeller in a major effort to stabilize the Monitor’s stern. John Broadwater, sanctuary manager, served as NOAA mission director. The second most active season in recorded history hampered efforts at the sanctuary during three periods in August, September, and October, but the mission succeeded in accomplishing several important goals.

Deployment of Mooring

This objective was accomplished early in the expedition. As soon as the USS Edenton was secured in a four-point mooring over the Monitor and the precise location of the Edenton relative to the Monitor was established, a new NOAA mooring was deployed. The mooring consists of a 1,000-pound steel anchor, a 30-foot length of heavy chain, and a braided nylon line attached to a steel spherical buoy. Because of commercial ship traffic in the area, the buoy was placed at a depth of approximately 40 feet. At that depth, it will not interfere with shipping, but can be easily located for diving operations. The anchor lies approximately 50 feet from the Monitor, aft of midships on the down-current (north side) and will serve as a diver down-line for future NOAA and private diving operations in the sanctuary.

NOAA Reconnaissance Dives

MARRS’95 was scheduled to begin on August 12 with the NOAA team arriving at Hatteras, conducting training dives, and then beginning joint site operations with the Navy on August 15. However, the mission was interrupted by Hurricane Felix. The USS Edenton was ordered to join a fleet sortie from Norfolk to the sheltered waters of the Chesapeake Bay and on August 15, the NOAA research team and shore support personnel were required by local emergency authorities to evacuate Hatteras. The NOAA research team and shore support personnel returned to Hatteras on August 19. The research team conducted a series of training dives, then rendezvoused at the sanctuary with the Edenton.

On August 24-25, the team conducted the first NOAA self-contained dives on the Monitor (see sidebar page 2). The NOAA dives were made from the Elusive, a research vessel from the National Undersea Research Center/University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Navy dives were conducted simultaneously from the Edenton. On the second dive, the NOAA and Navy dive teams actually met at the Monitor’s stern.

Propeller Recovery

NOAA made three dives and the Navy made seventeen dives before WE MOVED!
Middle School Curriculum Package Available for Upcoming School Year

Of particular interest to teachers: Field testing of our curriculum on the USS Monitor and the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary will be completed this school year and the curriculum will be available for the 1996-7 school year. The curriculum was developed for seventh grade classes, but may be suitable for other subject contents in fifth through eighth grades. To accompany the curriculum, we have assembled an outreach kit containing publications, brochures, posters, enlargements of photographs, and reproductions of artifacts recovered from the Monitor Sanctuary. There will be a 15-minute slide program for the Monitor and the Monitor Sanctuary. The outreach kit also contains posters, brochures, and other information on other National Marine Sanctuaries.

For classes interested in expanding their knowledge of the Civil War, we have assembled an "exploring the Civil War" kit.

Cataloging of Ernest W. Peterkin Papers

In the previous issue, we reported on the donation of the Ernest W. "Pete" Peterkin Papers to the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. Because of the historical value of this collection, funds from the Sanctuary and Reserves Division were made available in October to hire catalogers. As expected, the Peterkin Papers have yielded copious and widely varied information: copies of letters from eager eyewitnesses to the Monitor’s battle with the CSS Virginia; information on and photographs of various Monitor builder models; photographs of other monitors including, Columbus, Patrician, Canoncitos, Sacramento, Saugus, and Lehigh; and extensive material on the Tecumseh. There is also a large collection of photographs and other material from the Continental Iron Works, which built the Monitor.

But the most interesting and unique items are Pete’s many sketches of Monitors. Using a variety of primary sources, Pete compiled several large notebooks of sketches, most of which are annotated with measurements and routes to ships to other parts of the ship. Pete signed and dated all of them, and noted the sources from which the information came. This provides very basic information about the USS Monitor and the Monitor Sanctuary. Good for the classroom.

Special Events

Our Monitor traveling exhibit, constructed by the North Carolina Maritime Museum, Beaufort, North Carolina, with funding from the Robert N. and Mildred Davis Fund, will be on view at the North Carolina Maritime Museum from late May through October. The exhibit will be at the San Diego Maritime Museum beginning in June.

Editor’s Corner

The past year was a busy one for the Monitors. A major story that is still interesting in our lead article, a series of major stories provided much frustration during our field season. However, our education and outreach programs, which are funded largely by the San Diego Maritime Museum, continue to grow. Several new education products were completed this past year and are available through the Monitor Museum. Our outreach efforts have been very evident in our meetings with other institutions.

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New Brochure

A brochure titled "Ten Most- Often-Asked Questions About the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary" is now available for a list of publications and other material currently available from this office. One item may be of particular interest to teachers. The brochure on the USS Monitor and the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary will be completed this school year and the curriculum will be available for the 1996-7 school year (see separate article). As noted in the FYI section, the Monitor traveling exhibit will be at the San Diego Maritime Museum this summer. This exhibit spent the spring months at the Smithsonian’s Museum of American History. The permanent

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