In 1861, as news of CSS Virginia's construction made its way north, the Union knew they must have an ironclad of their own. Congress appropriated $1.5 million for the building of ironclads, and a call for proposals was published in major newspapers. John Ericsson's design simply as a building material. He presented a conceptual design of a steam-powered, ironclad ship with a rotating gun turret to the U.S. Navy and promised to build it in 100 days. On January 30, 1862, just 88 days after the keel was laid, the USS Monitor launched from Greenpoint, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Famous Firsts

- U.S. Navy ironclad warship
- Revolving gun turret on a warship
- Battle between ironclad warships
- Entirely new class of warship
- Below-the-waterline flushing toilet
- Entirely new class of naval warfare
- Underwater battle
- Entirely new class of naval architecture
- Entirely new class of naval tactics
- Entirely new class of naval armament

Life Aboard

- During the Monitor's short time in service, an average of 55 sailors, ranging in age from 19 to 64, occupied the confining space below its decks. Through letters written by Commander George S. Geer, we know that life was difficult. In summer, temperatures inside the ship rose to 120°F. Many sailors, too weak even on the deck for fear of heat from the fire, inside the ship, it was crowded and lighting was poor. Food was limited — bean soup with precious few beans was a staple. Sundays were bath days, when the crew stripped to the waist and washed with a pail of water. Yet despite these hardships, the Monitor crew persevered.

Red Signal Lantern

- The night the Monitor sank, eyewitnesses reported that at approximately 12:30 a.m. on Dec. 31, 1862, the red distress signal lamp atop the tower and its ship hull was extinguished. When first observed, this lantern was discovered lying on the seashore near the blockades, a scene that became the backdrop for the new ironclad's first salute. The night the Monitor sank, the night the Monitor saved the Union, on the 12th of December; at 12 o'clock, the Monitor stood alone.
MONITOR NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

With the discovery of the Monitor in 1973, Congresswoman Walter Jones, Jr. proposed to use the recently passed National Marine Sanctuary Act to protect the ironclad ship. On Jan. 30, 1975, the nation’s first national marine sanctuary was designated. Today, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary remains committed to engaging visitors and local communities through education and outreach to learn more about our nation’s maritime heritage. Whether it’s participating in several years of expanding local economies, placing wayfinding signs to make a Monitor Trail, providing educational programs, or initiatives that teach about our maritime heritage and the USS Monitor, or creating a series of documentary videos depicting the sites placed in North Carolina, the sanctuary looks to inspire new audiences to protect our rich maritime heritage resources and dive into coastal stewards.

Community Involvement
Community involvement is key to the successful protection and management of sanctuary resources. Each national marine sanctuary has an enlisting board of community members to help facilitate communication between the sanctuary and community members. Sanctuaries work to protect vital natural and cultural resources of America’s coastal and marine waters while connecting people and communities through education, science and management.

For more information on Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, regulations and permits, visit: www.monitor.noaa.gov

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas encompassing almost 180,000 square miles of ocean and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov

VISIT THE MONITOR

Visiting the USS Monitor is easy; it lies on the bottom of the ocean, 16 miles off Cape Hatteras, N.C. Fortunately, for those who can’t want to get their feet wet, there are many places that offer visitors the opportunity to discover the wonders of this great ship. From our primary visitor’s center in Beaufort, N.C., to the Outer Banks National Parks, North Carolina, people can walk through exhibits, interact with kiosks, download videos and steam engine. On March 9, 2007, the Mariners' Museum unveiled a replica of the turret and recovered arti-

The Mariners’ Museum: The USS Monitor Center at The Mariners’ Museum (built on a site near the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary) serves as a documentation center to interpret the Monitor. Through lectures, brochures, dive skits, kiosks, exhibits, videos, and more, the sanctuary strives to promote North Carolina’s diverse and rich maritime history. A series of online videos, the Outer Banks Maritime Heritage Trial, features iconic places of coastal North Carolina and can be accessed at http://monitor.noaa.gov/obxtrail/welcome.html

NORTH CAROLINA’S RICH MARITIME HISTORY

The treacherous waters off North Carolina’s coast have claimed more than 2,000 ships, including the USS Monitor, in the area known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic. Shipwrecks from the Colonial era through WWII are found in this “graveyard,” and represent a unique cross-section of our nation’s maritime history. NOAA, which has a long history of protecting our nation’s maritime heritage, will continue to protect the Monitor, partners with academic institutions and other federal agencies to study, interpret, and conserve historically significant shipwrecks located in this region in an effort to connect people with their maritime heritage.

Timeline

For almost 111 years, Monitor has been on the ocean, just 16 miles south-southeast of Cape Hatteras, N.C. Since its discovery in 1973, efforts have been ongoing to protect the Monitor’s most important component – the shell. Through lectures, brochures, dive skits, kiosks, exhibits, videos, and more, the sanctuary strives to promote North Carolina’s diverse and rich maritime history. A series of online videos, the Outer Banks Maritime Heritage Trial, features iconic places of coastal North Carolina and can be accessed at http://monitor.noaa.gov/obxtrail/welcome.html.

U.S.S. MONITOR

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