



The *USS Monitor*

During the Peninsula Campaign in the spring of 1862, a variety of innovative weapons saw action. But nothing captured the public's attention more than ironclad warships, in particular the *USS Monitor*. After its epic duel with the *CSS Virginia* at Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862, the *Monitor* next found fame here at Drewry's Bluff during the battle on May 15.

Contrary to some reports, the *Monitor*, despite its squat turret, did not have difficulty bringing its guns to bear. Commanded by Lt. William N. Jeffers, it fired steadily against Fort Drewry. The Confederate cannon, after bouncing a few ineffective rounds off the ironclad, turned their focus to the vulnerable *USS Galena*. This proved to be the *Monitor's* last major action.



Photo courtesy of Monitor Collection, NOAA

The *Monitor* went down on December 31, 1862, sunk in an Atlantic gale off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Sixteen crewmen died, perhaps including some of the men who posed in the black and white photograph taken in July 1862. In 1975, the wreck became the nation's first National Marine Sanctuary, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The turret of the warship emerged from the waves in August 2002, raised by NOAA and the United States Navy. It is on display at the *USS Monitor* Center at The Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia.

"It was one of those warm, muggy days... which, shut up closely as we were, made ventilation very difficult. At times we were filled with powder smoke below threatening suffocation to us all. Some of the hardest looking men dropped fainting at the guns."

William Keeler, an officer aboard the *USS Monitor* during the Battle of Drewry's Bluff.

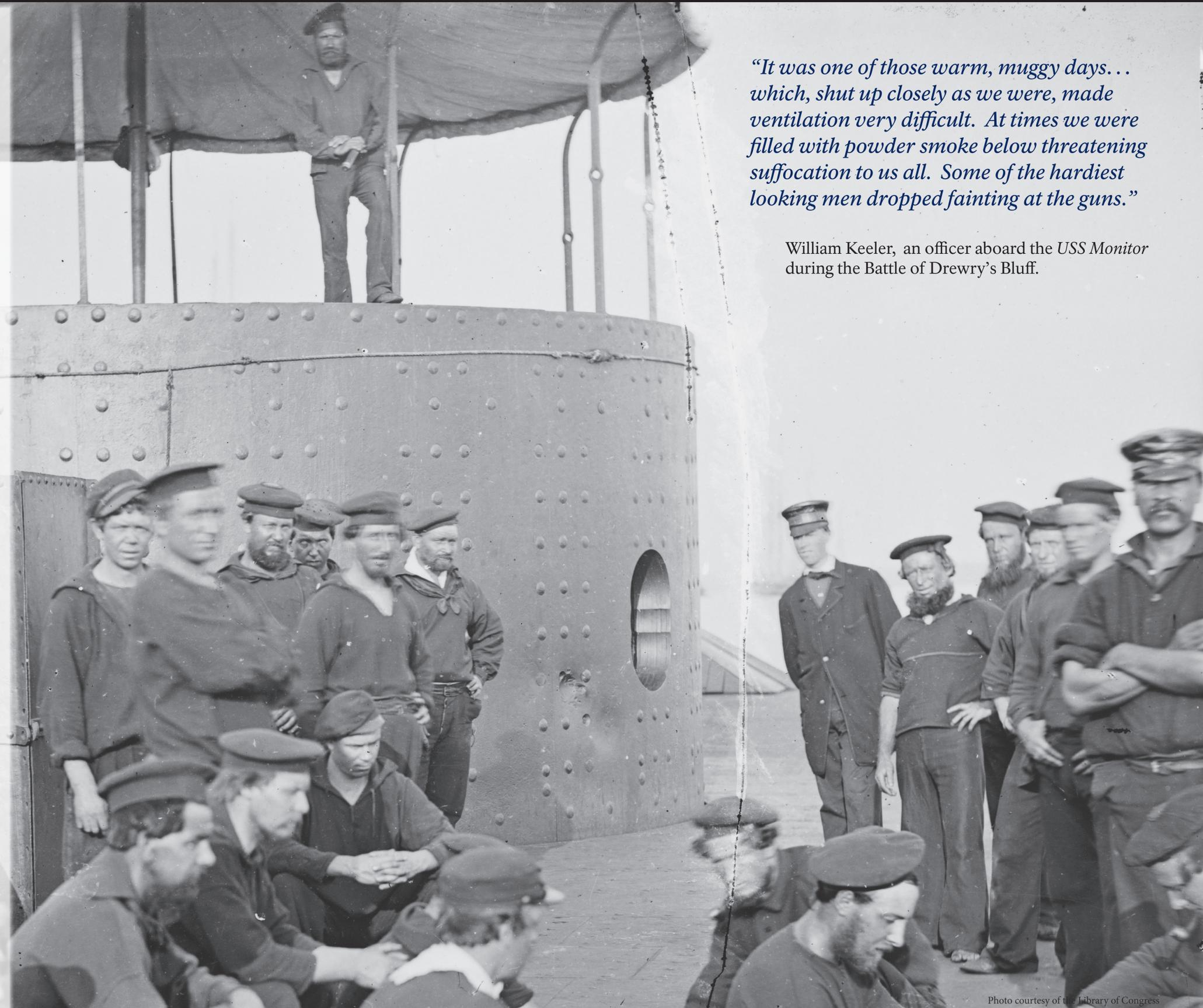


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