

# USS MONITOR TRAIL

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

MONITOR NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



## USS MONITOR: AMERICA'S FIRST IRONCLAD



On July 9, 1862, as the ship docked in Virginia on the James River, James F. Gibson took the only known photos of the *Monitor* and her crew (above). Monitor National Marine Sanctuary is located approximately 16 miles south-southeast of Cape Hatteras, N.C.

Launched on Jan. 30, 1862, at the Continental Iron Works in Greenpoint, N.Y., the USS *Monitor* made history as the Union Navy's first ironclad warship. It fought the Confederate ironclad CSS *Virginia* in the first-ever clash between two ironclads at the Battle of Hampton Roads on March 9 — an encounter that signaled the start of a new era of naval warfare. The *Monitor's* short but historic career came to an end on Dec. 31, 1862, when it sank in a storm off Cape Hatteras, N.C., with the loss of 16 sailors.

In 1975, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) designated the USS *Monitor's* wreck site as the nation's first national marine sanctuary. Over the years, NOAA and partners have undertaken several recovery operations and retrieved artifacts for conservation. When U.S. Navy divers recovered the ship's iconic gun turret in 2002, archaeologists discovered the remains of two sailors inside.



On March 9, 2007, NOAA and its partner, The Mariners' Museum, opened the doors to the new \$30 million, 63,500-square-foot USS *Monitor* Center, including a full-scale replica of the *Monitor*.

## USS MONITOR CENTER - AT THE MARINERS' MUSEUM

In 1987, NOAA selected The Mariners' Museum as the principal repository for the conservation and preservation of USS *Monitor* artifacts. The museum's state-of-the-art Batten Conservation Laboratory Complex opened in 2006. This facility houses thousands of large and small *Monitor* artifacts in an environment where museum visitors can watch conservators work on the turret, steam engine and Dahlgren guns from just feet away.

In 2007, in partnership with NOAA, the museum unveiled the USS *Monitor* Center. At the heart of the exhibit is "Ironclad Revolution," a melding of *Monitor* artifacts, original documents, paintings, personal accounts, interactive exhibits and immersive environments designed to appeal to all ages.

