

BATTLE OF HAMPTON ROADS – Day 1, March 8, 1862

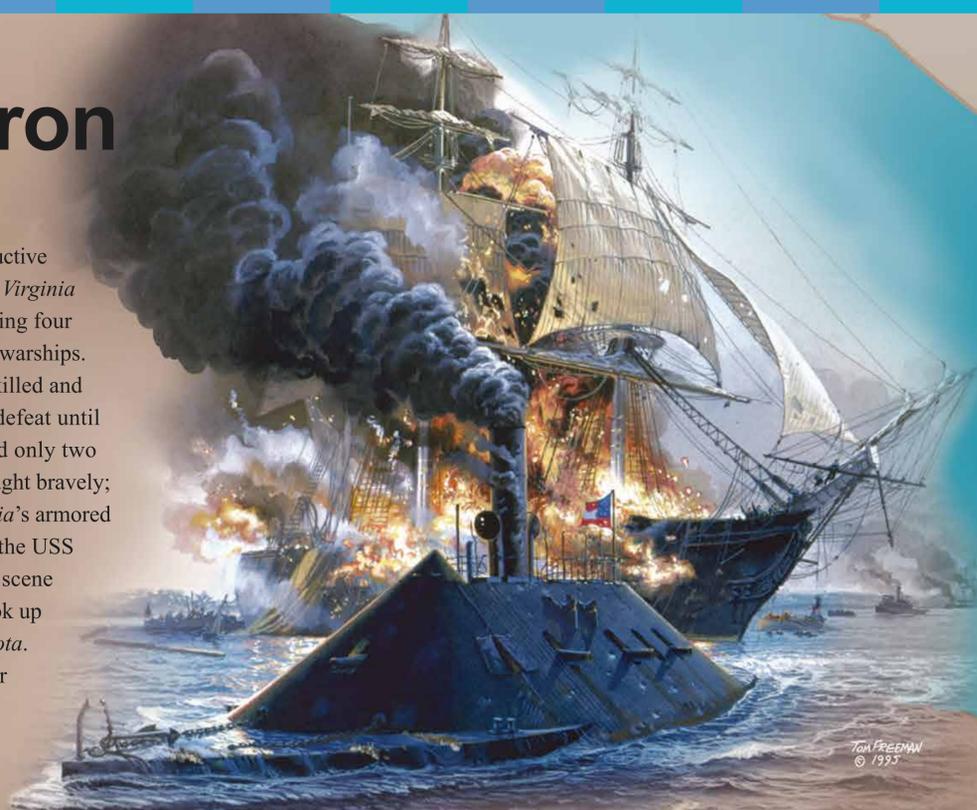
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
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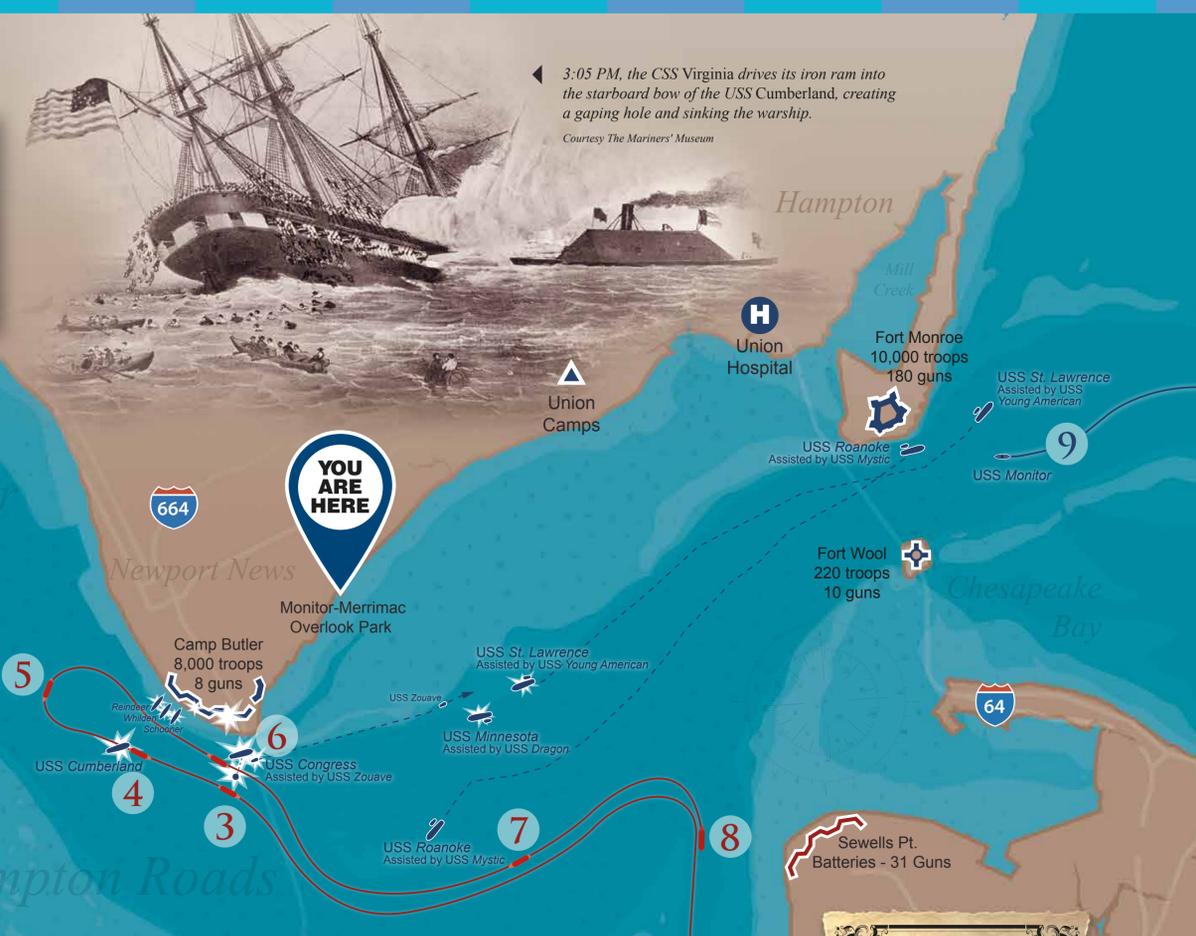


Wood Faces Iron

The CSS *Virginia* was slow and unwieldy, but this Confederate ironclad monster had one of the most destructive maiden voyages in history. In less than eight hours, the *Virginia* attacked the entire Union fleet in Hampton Roads sinking four vessels, capturing a transport and damaging four other warships. The destruction left behind totaled 241 Union sailors killed and more than 100 wounded. It was the worst U.S. Navy defeat until Pearl Harbor. In contrast, the crew of *Virginia* suffered only two casualties and a dozen wounded. The Union vessels fought bravely; however, their guns were unable to penetrate the *Virginia*'s armored casemate. *Virginia* seemed unstoppable. That evening the USS *Monitor* arrived in Hampton Roads and encountered a scene of carnage and despair for the Union Navy. *Monitor* took up a protective position next to the grounded USS *Minnesota*. The arrival of the USS *Monitor* buoyed Union hopes for a battle that was certain to resume the next day. On March 8th, the CSS *Virginia* became the world's most powerful weapon. But only for one day.



Learn more about the ironclads and the battle at the USS Monitor Center



3:05 PM, the CSS *Virginia* drives its iron ram into the starboard bow of the USS *Cumberland*, creating a gaping hole and sinking the warship.

Courtesy The Mariners' Museum

At 2:55 pm, hot shot from CSS *Virginia* sets USS *Congress* on fire. At 4:05 pm CSS *Virginia* shells the helpless frigate again. USS *Congress* surrenders at 4:40 pm and is fully engulfed in flames at 5:45 pm. Her magazines explode at 12 am.

Painting courtesy Tom Freeman

DAY 1 March 8, 1862

TIMELINE



UNION



CONFEDERACY

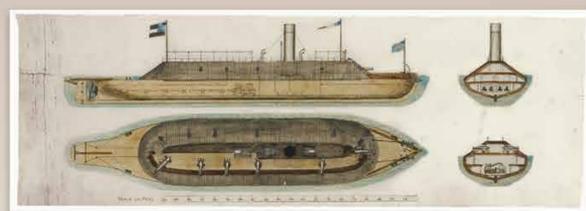
10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM
10:00 am CSS <i>Virginia</i> 's armored casemate is coated with a thick layer of "ship's grease" to help deflect shots.	11:30 am CSS <i>Virginia</i> departs Gosport Navy Yard in Portsmouth, Virginia.	1:00 pm CSS <i>Virginia</i> passes Craney Island and the Confederate sailors are ordered to man their guns.	2:55 pm CSS <i>Virginia</i> and USS <i>Congress</i> exchange gunfire. Hot shot from CSS <i>Virginia</i> sets USS <i>Congress</i> on fire.	3:05 pm CSS <i>Virginia</i> rams USS <i>Cumberland</i> and both ships exchange gunfire.	3:35 pm USS <i>Cumberland</i> sinks.	3:40 pm Since CSS <i>Virginia</i> was slow and unwieldy, it is forced to steam up the James River to turn around. Upon its return, CSS <i>Virginia</i> destroys two Union transports and captures a third near the Union Camp Butler. CSS <i>Virginia</i> also fires on Camp Butler.	4:00 pm USS <i>Roanoke</i> runs aground while attempting to join the battle.	4:05 pm CSS <i>Virginia</i> fires on USS <i>Congress</i> . USS <i>Zouave</i> , USS <i>Congress</i> 's tug, is damaged from the steady fire and flees the scene. With many casualties, USS <i>Congress</i> is forced to surrender. While under a white flag of truce, the Union forces at Camp Butler open fire on the Confederates. In retaliation, the CSS <i>Virginia</i> 's captain orders the destruction of USS <i>Congress</i> .	5:30 pm USS <i>St. Lawrence</i> runs aground while attempting to join the battle.	8:00 pm USS <i>St. Lawrence</i> is refloated and towed back to Fort Monroe.	9:00 pm USS <i>Monitor</i> enters Hampton Roads and is ordered to take up station near and protect USS <i>Minnesota</i> .	11:00 pm USS <i>Monitor</i> anchors next to USS <i>Minnesota</i> and both ships are illuminated by the burning USS <i>Congress</i> .	12:00 am USS <i>Congress</i> explodes.

LEGEND

- CSS Virginia
- CSS Virginia Movement
- Union Warship
- Union Transport
- Union Tug
- Union Vessel Retreat
- USS Monitor
- USS Monitor Movement

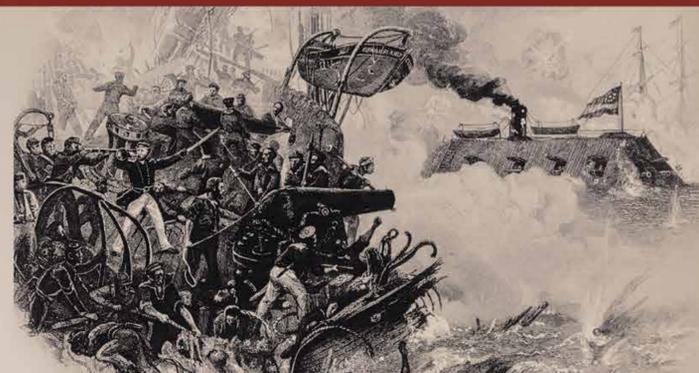
Scale in Miles
0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1

Part of a larger print, this depiction of CSS *Virginia* shows interior features and details.



3:35 PM
USS *Cumberland*'s acting commander (in white pants) urging remaining crew to continue fighting the CSS *Virginia* before abandoning their sinking ship.

Naval History and Heritage Command



Gosport Navy Yard was used to convert the USS *Merrimack* into the CSS *Virginia*

Naval History and Heritage Command

