



Iron Against Iron

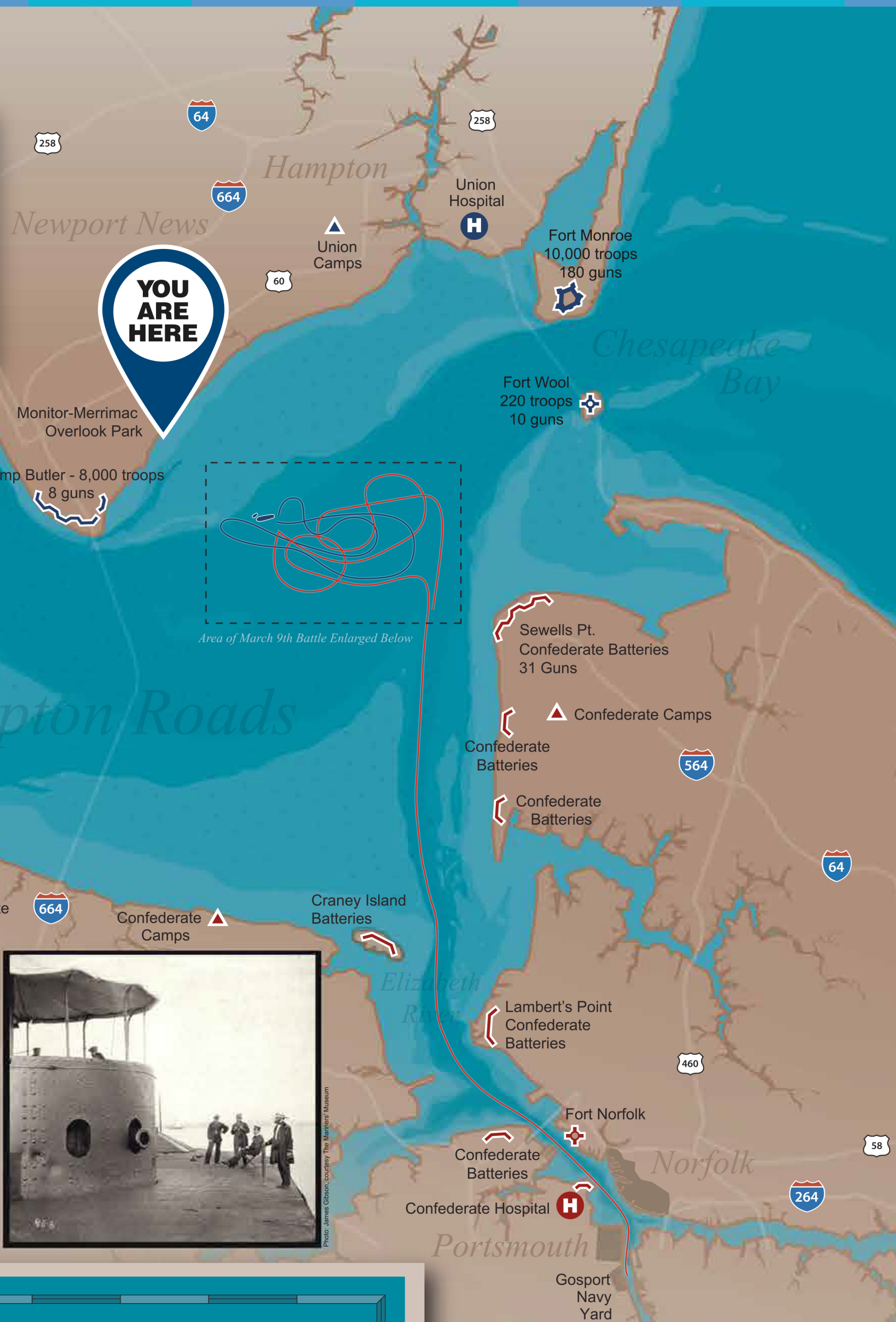
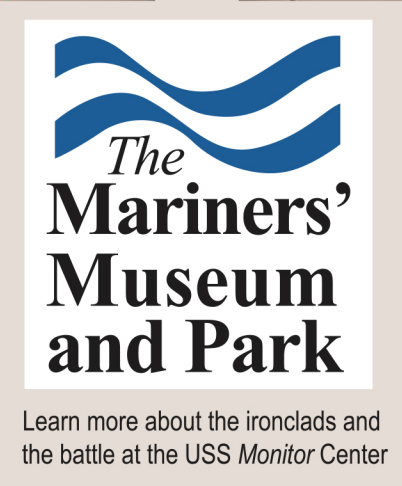
As the news spread of the impending clash of the ironclads, Northerners and Southerners alike lined the shores of Hampton Roads to watch the day’s battle. Confident from the previous day’s victory, the *CSS Virginia*’s crew began the day with two jiggers of whiskey and a hearty breakfast. Eager to return to the battlefield, the *Virginia* fired the opening salvo from a thousand yards out against the *USS Minnesota*, hitting the ship and causing an explosion. The *USS Monitor* moved to intercept the *Virginia* to protect the *Minnesota*. For the next four hours, the two ironclads circled one another, trading shot and shell at point-blank range but doing no significant damage. Through it all, the *Monitor* protected the *Minnesota*, and it remained afloat.

The battle that day left neither the *Monitor* nor the *Virginia* seriously damaged, and both sides claimed victory. Ultimately, historians have called the battle a draw. However, there was one clear winner: ironclad technology. The age of wooden warships was over.

DAY 2 March 9, 1862

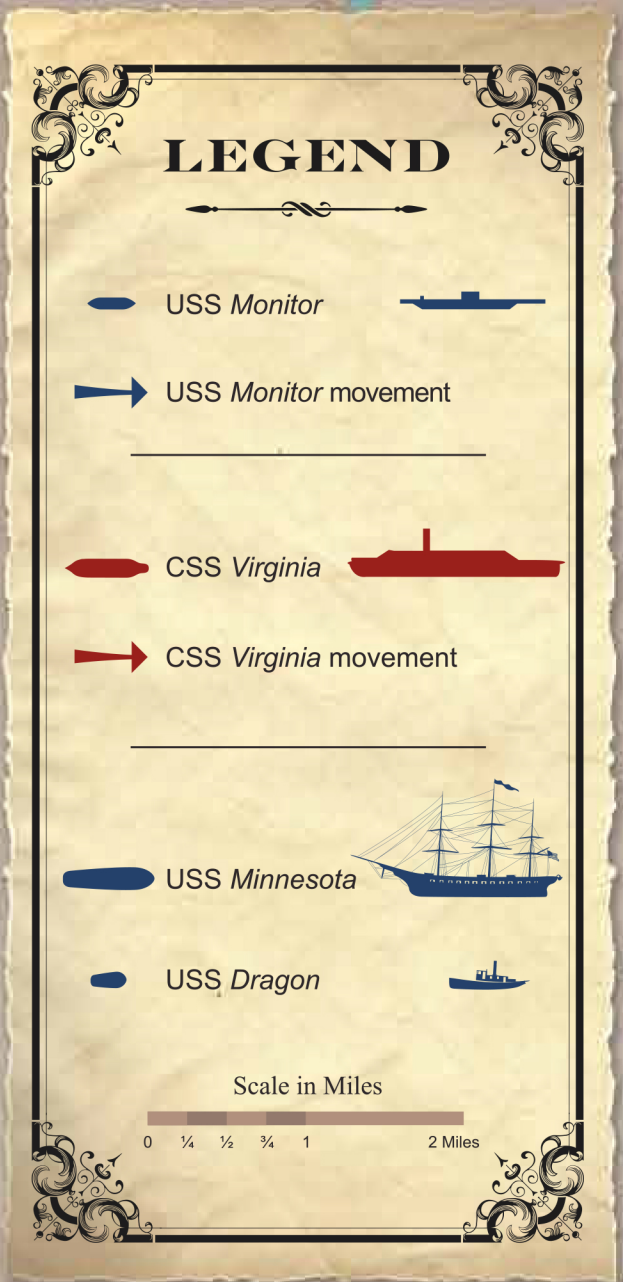
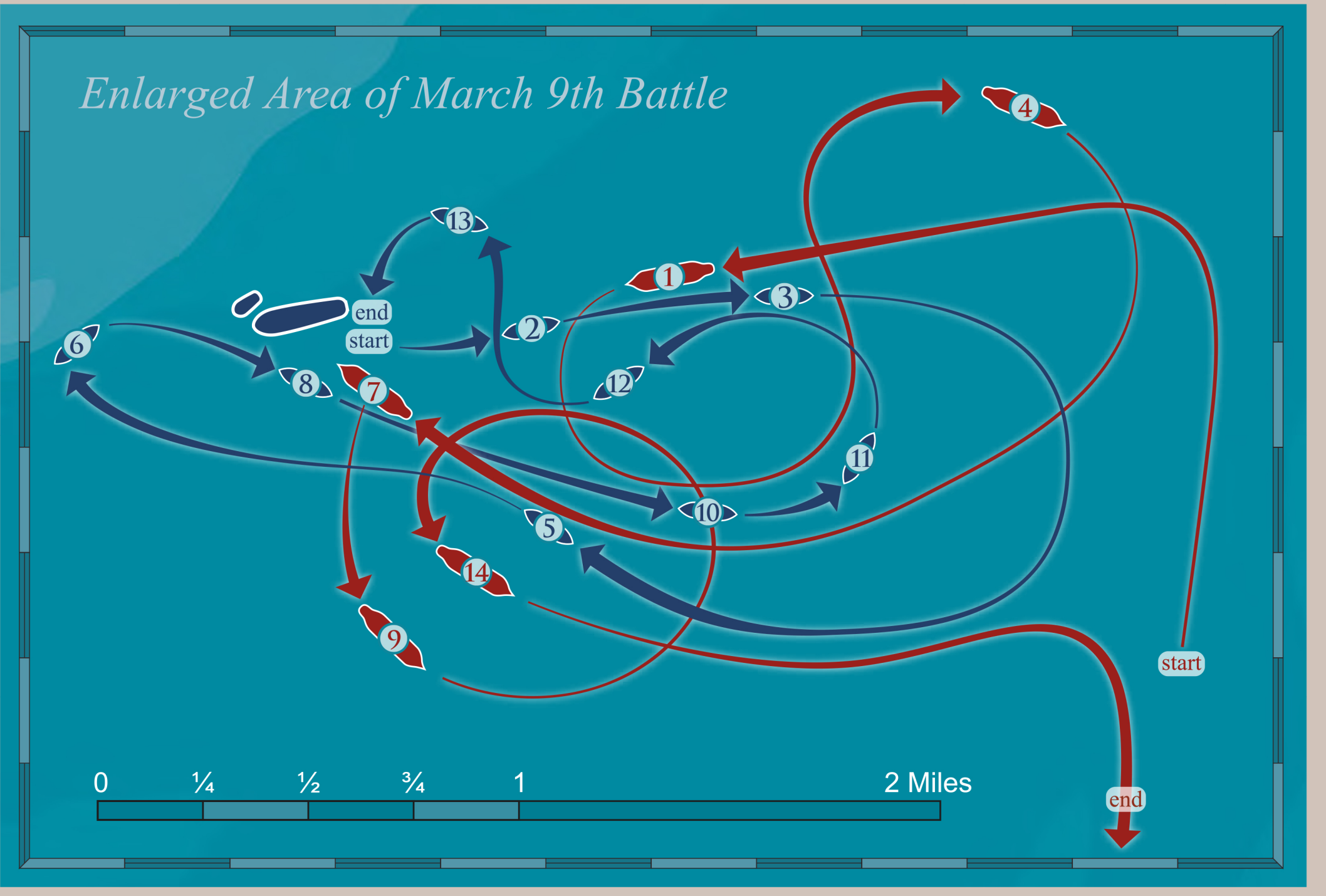
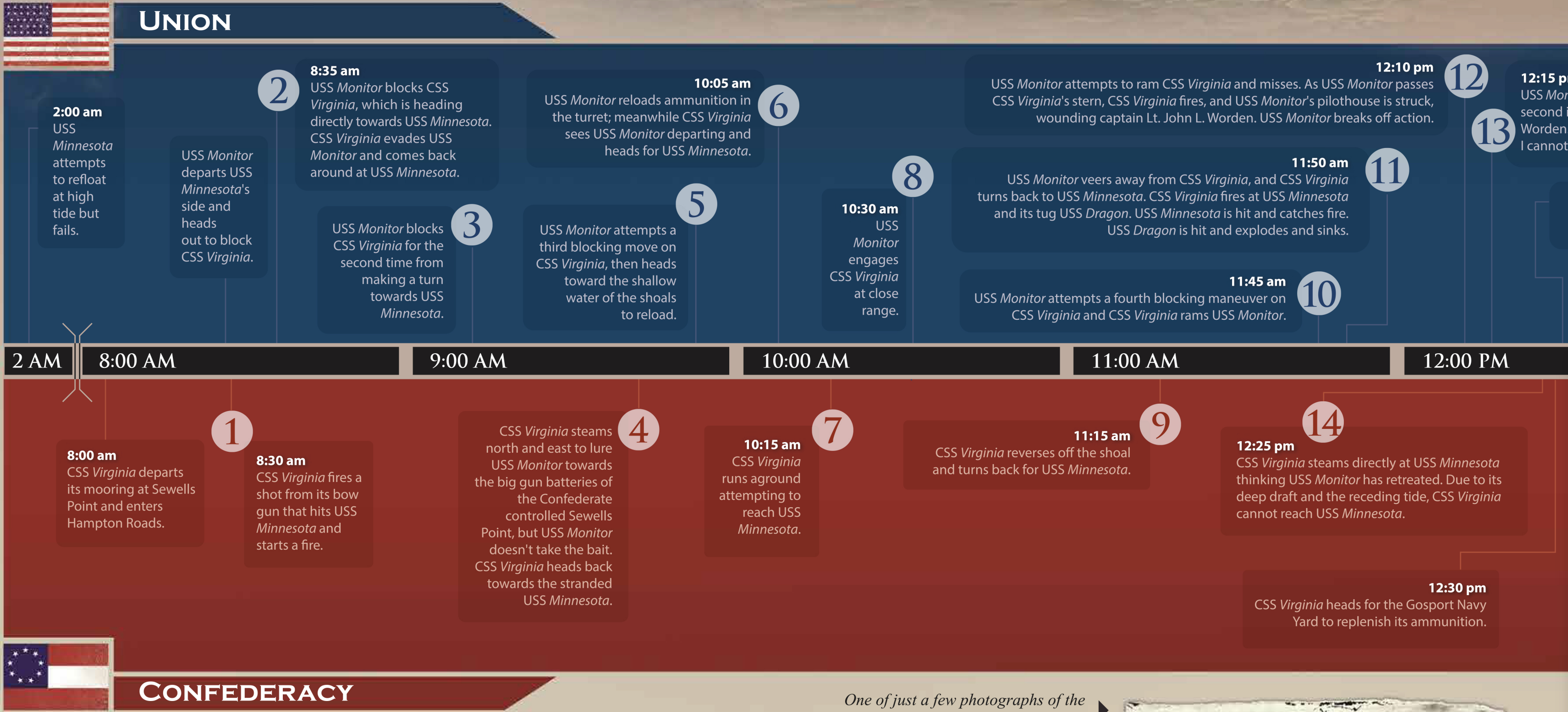


A Painting by J. O. Davidson of the battle between USS Monitor and CSS Virginia. From the Collection of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Courtesy The Mariners' Museum

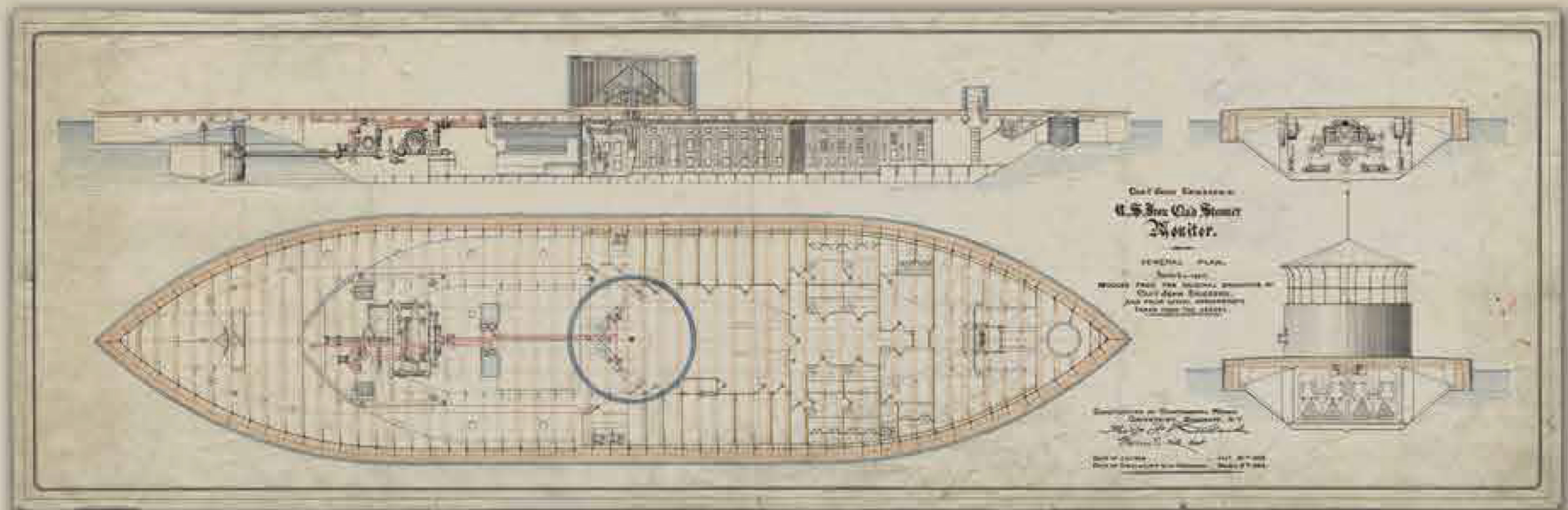


Several of Monitor's officers standing on deck; dents on the rotating turret from the March 9 battle clearly visible.

TIMELINE



General plan and profile views of Monitor, showing interior features and details, published in February 1862, just after her launch.



One of just a few photographs of the USS Monitor, providing the only actual evidence of the ironclad's appearance and crew.

