

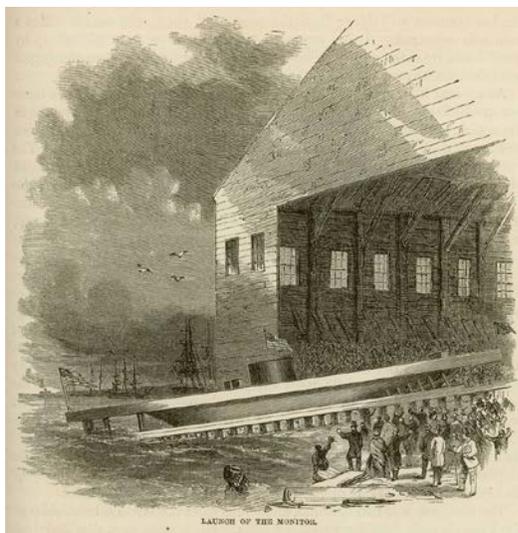
Looking Back at 2017

A Year in Review

As 2017 draws to an end, we want to take a few minutes to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. The year was busy, and this coming year promises to be even busier filled with new partnerships, expeditions, outreach events, educational activities, and more! We continue to protect and conserve our nation's maritime heritage off the North Carolina coast, and in August 2018, we will commemorate World War I and the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the U.S. Coast Guard Light Vessel (LV-71), also known as the Diamond Shoals Lightship. We invite you to join us as we move forward for an exciting new year!

January

Each January, we commemorate the launching of the USS *Monitor* and the great men who built and served on it. The idea of the *Monitor* was born amidst a nation in turmoil, and the role it played in saving the Union will be forever etched in history. In January, we had the opportunity to honor another great generation when *Monitor* staff were asked to lay a wreath at the National World War II Memorial on the Capitol Mall in Washington, DC. The wreath was laid in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United States entering World War II's Battle of the Atlantic.



Left: Launching of the USS *Monitor* on January 30, 1862. Photo: Library of Congress.

Right: National WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. *Monitor* staff and other dignitaries lay wreaths in honor of the men and women who fought and died in World War II. Photo: NOAA

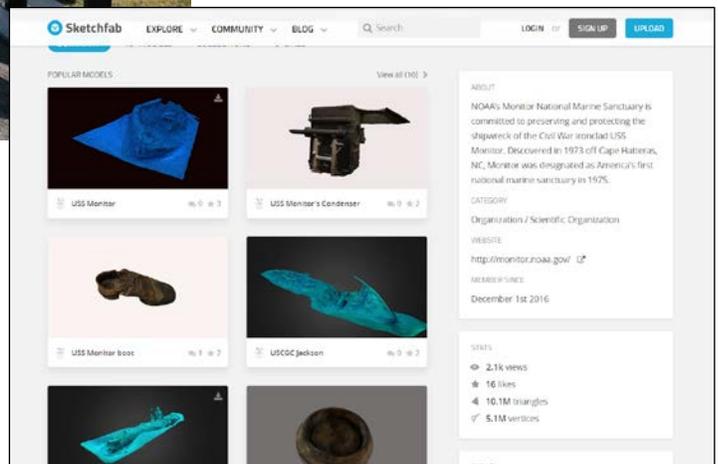
February

Monitor staff spent the month in North Carolina speaking to various organizations, such as Lions Clubs and Rotary Clubs, to share how NOAA is working to protect historical shipwrecks off the North Carolina coast that sank during World War II in the Battle of the Atlantic. During the month, *Monitor* archaeologists also worked with avocational divers with the Battle of the Atlantic Research and Expedition Group (BAREG) in a symposium on World War II shipwrecks off the Outer Banks of North Carolina.



March

To commemorate the 155th anniversary of the Civil War Battle of Hampton Roads, the sanctuary unveiled three new wayside signs at *Monitor – Merrimac* Overlook Park in Newport News, Virginia. The signs tell the story of the battle and give visitors a new perspective on the events of March 8th and 9th, 1862. Four new *Monitor* artifacts were also added to the digital collection on our Sketchfab site. These 3-D images let you view them from any angle giving you an in-depth look at the artifacts. <https://sketchfab.com/NOAAMonitorNMS>



April

CBS Sunday Morning aired a video segment on the 2016 Battle of the Atlantic Expedition. The expedition gave researchers the first look at two World War II shipwrecks that sank on July 15, 1942. The German U-boat, U-576 and the merchant tanker, SS *Bluefields* were engaged in the Battle of KS-520 when they sank. Their location remained unknown for over 73 years until 2014, when NOAA discovered the two shipwrecks lying only 240 yards apart in about 750 feet of water just off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/16battlefield/background/battle/battle.html>



CBS NEWS | April 2, 2017, 10:04 AM

A German U-boat's watery grave off North Carolina

May

Through the support and generous funding of Preserve America, *Monitor* staff helped to design a new World War II exhibit at the Virginia Beach Surf & Rescue Museum. The exhibit depicts World War II as it happened off the mid-Atlantic coast of the United States. Along with the exhibit, a new wayside sign was also installed outside the museum.



June

As part of our ongoing efforts to work with avocational divers, *Monitor* maritime archaeologists assisted the Battle of the Atlantic Research and Expedition Group (BAREG) in documenting and surveying the World War II tanker, *F.W. Abrams*. The tanker sank off Cape Hatteras on June 15, 1942, and the work of BAREG will give the sanctuary additional images and a completed site plan. Also, that month, Gerald Hanley was awarded our Volunteer of the Year Award for his hundreds of hours in support of the *Monitor* artifact conservation.



BAREG avocational divers on F.W. Abrams. Photo: BAREG



Gerald Hanley, MNMS's Volunteer of the Year, observes USS *Monitor*'s Dahlgren gun. Photo: Courtesy of The Mariners' Museum

July

Summer is always a busy time for our maritime archaeologists and July proved no exception. In partnership with NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) in Beaufort, North Carolina, field operations were conducted aboard the NOAA Ship *Nancy Foster* in an effort to better understand how fish communities use North Carolina shipwrecks as habitat. Biological assessments were conducted on several shipwrecks.



August

Each summer for the past several years, *Monitor's* maritime archaeologists have collaborated with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) in performing baseline significance assessments. This summer, the assessments were conducted on suspected maritime heritage sites near Frying Pan Shoals, North Carolina.



September

Renowned artist, Wayne White, created a multi-faceted exhibit, MONITORIUM that opened in September at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). The exhibit uses props and puppets to carve out White's unique perspective on the USS *Monitor*, the Battle of Hampton Roads, and the people associated with the ship. The exhibit runs through February 2018.



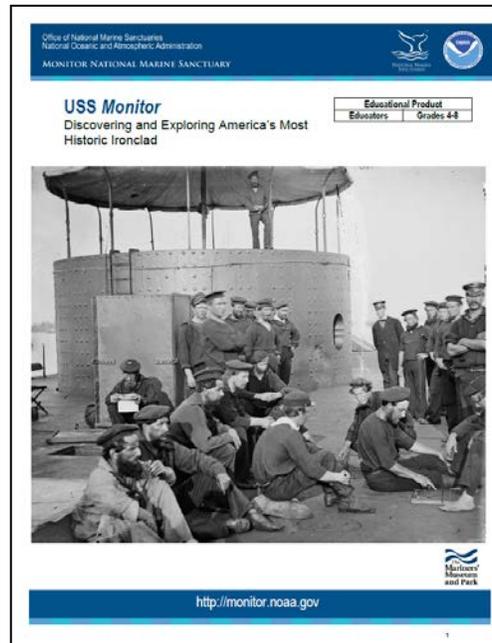
October

This was a month for celebrating maritime heritage. *Monitor* staff gave presentations at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. Attendees learned about World War II's Battle of the Atlantic off the North Carolina coast and how NOAA works to preserve these historically significant shipwrecks. The month was also a time to enjoy a little seafood at the North Carolina Seafood Festival, while educating students about shipwrecks as artificial reefs.



November

We released our newest curriculum, *USS Monitor: Discovering and Exploring America's Most Historic Ironclad*. The educator guide was created in partnership with The Mariners' Museum and is available free for download online. <https://monitor.noaa.gov/education/teachers.html>. *Monitor* staff also presented at the North Carolina Maritime History Conference in Corolla and the Museum of the Albemarle highlighting the Battle of the Atlantic off the North Carolina coast and how NOAA works to protect these historically significant shipwrecks.



December

As we close the year, we want to remember the sinking of the *USS Monitor*. As Paymaster William Keeler said, "What the fire of the enemy failed to do, the elements have accomplished." And let us never forget and always honor the 16 men who died that fateful News Year's Eve in 1862, when the *Monitor* sank off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.



Forward to 2018

This is just a small portion of the work that has been accomplished over the year! It has been an amazing year, but we are very excited for what is to come. We look forward to 2018, as we plan new expeditions, form new partnerships, create new educational content, reach out to North Carolina communities through outreach events, give new presentations, and so much more!

2018 will also be the year we remember World War I as it happened off the North Carolina coast. Next August, in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, we will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the U.S. Coast Guard Light Vessel (LV-71), also known as the Diamond Shoals Lightship.



Thank you for your continued support of the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary.
Have a wonderful holiday season and a very happy New Year!

National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration

National Ocean Service

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Monitor National Marine Sanctuary



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NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

● National Marine Sanctuary
▲ Marine National Monument
■ Proposed National Marine Sanctuary



View a collection of fascinating photographs and an intriguing video each week from your national marine sanctuaries at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/earthisblue.html>.

<http://monitor.noaa.gov>