

America's Heritage

Civil War Gun Turret to Rise Again

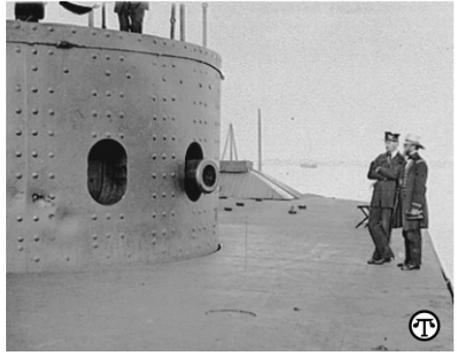
(NAPSA)—A 140 year old “technological wonder” rose from the sea. The renowned ironclad U.S.S. *Monitor* sank in a storm off the Outer Banks of North Carolina in late 1862. Now, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Navy have raised the ship’s famous revolving gun turret, complete with its two Dahlgren cannons.

The remains of the *Monitor* rest 240 feet down on the ocean floor off of Cape Hatteras. In 1975, the site was designated the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary—the nation’s first marine sanctuary.

The effort to raise the gun turret took six weeks. This was the grand finale and most involved in a long series of recovery expeditions on the wreck of the *Monitor*. The ship is lying upside down on the ocean floor. To gain access to the gun turret, a portion of the hull structure had to be removed. The deck area over the turret was covered with a lot of debris and significant artifacts were found in the area.

The turret weighs nearly 150 tons. The weight of the lifting frame with which the turret was raised increased the total weight being lifted to more than 200 tons.

Now that the turret is recovered, it will be taken by barge to



The gun turret of the famed ironclad U.S.S. *Monitor* is raised.

The Mariners’ Museum in Newport News, Va., where it will be conserved and placed on exhibit. The museum already houses the ship’s anchor, propeller engine and many other artifacts.

The *Monitor* is most famous for being half of the battle between the world’s first two ironclads at Hampton Roads, Va.; the other ship being the C.S.S. *Virginia*, formerly the U.S.S. *Merrimack*. The battle, which ended inconclusively, helped speed the change from wooden sailing ships to iron steamships, and was a major turning point in naval history.

The raising of the *Monitor*’s gun turret was conducted by NOAA, the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two, and The Mariners’ Museum. For more information, go to <http://monitor.nos.noaa.gov>.