

America's Heritage

Civil War USS *Monitor* Steam Engine Recovered

(NAPSA)—A piece of history has been lifted from the ocean depths. For the first time in nearly 140 years the engine of the shipwrecked Civil War ironclad USS *Monitor* broke the surface of the Atlantic Ocean in a recovery mission carried out by scientists from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Ocean Service. The NOAA team, along with scores of U.S. Navy divers, worked around the clock for 28 days to free the ship's 30-ton steam engine from the "Graveyard of the Atlantic."

The *Monitor*, famous for its Civil War battle with the Confederate ship the CSS *Virginia* (ex-*Merrimac*), rests upside down on a sand-covered seafloor approximately 16 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras, N.C., in the waters of NOAA's Monitor National Marine Sanctuary.

The battle between the *Monitor* and the *Virginia* revolutionized war at sea. The March 9, 1862 battle marked the end of an era of wooden-hulled sailing warships and the dawn of an era of ironclad, turreted and steam powered naval vessels. The *Monitor* survived the battle, but later that year, on New Year's Eve, sank in a gale off the coast of North Carolina. It remained undiscovered for over 100 years.

On July 16, 2001, a 400-ton crane aboard the Derrick Barge *Wotan* hoisted the steam engine



More than 150 divers worked for four weeks to raise the *Monitor's* engine. Now, planning has begun to raise the gun turret.

from 240 feet below the ocean's surface to a waiting ferry barge. The engine was transported to a 93,000 gallon steel tank at The Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Va., where conservators will begin a ten-year process to preserve the historic steam engine.

Efforts to raise the *Monitor* began more than a decade ago. NOAA scientists, concerned about the rapid deterioration of the ship, began plans to salvage the remainder of the ship before it was lost forever.

"This was a stunning accomplishment," said John Broadwater, manager of NOAA's Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. "Now we can turn our attention to recovering the *Monitor's* soul, her revolving gun turret."

More information on the expedition and the sanctuary is available at www.monitor.nos.noaa.gov.