

National Patriotic Instructors Page March 2012

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The Naval Battle of The Monitor and The Virginia (aka The Merrimack) and what it Means Today

To those of us who study The American Civil War, The Famous Battle that took place off Hampton Roads Virginia on 9 March 1862 is a little bit mystery and History. It was a battle between Two Iron Clad warships, the first such Battle in Naval Warfare History. It was an event that symbolized the Triumph of industrial age warfare, although the contest ended in a draw.

As most of us know ,The CSS Virginia had attacked and destroyed The USS Congress and The USS Cumberland The previous day (8 March 1862). On This day (9 March 1862) The Virginia was after The USS Minnesota. As The Virginia approached the Minnesota, it noticed a small craft that appeared to be a "cheese box on a raft" It was in fact The USS Monitor.

The Union answer to The Confederate Ironclad. The Monitor had arrived to Hampton Roads only The Previous evening, and was ready to engage the Virginia in conflict. The two warships began a battle that lasted for several hours. The Virginia lost her smokestack, and the Monitor had difficulty in maneuvering away from Virginia. Shortly after 12 noon, The Virginia gunners concentrated its firepower on the Monitor's pilothouse. The Monitor commander Lt. John L. Worden was blinded by this attack and had to be relieved at the conn. At this point, The Virginia had turned away from battle towards Norfolk.

As with many things in Our Civil War, The Battle of The Ironclads was a first. The ingenuity and courage of our ancestors again is something that reminds us all that changing times require changing thinking and actions. As we remember this famous Naval Battle, we are again reminded of the hazards and difficulties they faced in their daily lives. As we in The SUVCW know, the remembrance and perpetuation of these events are something we are charged to pass on, however we must also tell everyone why we remember these things and what they mean to us living today. The sacrifices of our Nation, and the trial it passed through are what we admire and respect. Let us pledge to Never Forget. May it always be so.