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Transformative Technology to Be Unveiled at Battle of Hampton Roads Commemoration Day

Groundbreaking underwater imaging captures USS Monitor with unprecedented clarity

NEWPORT NEWS, VA — History meets groundbreaking innovation on Saturday, March 7, as The Mariners' Museum and Park hosts its annual [Battle of Hampton Roads Commemoration Day](#), featuring the first public unveiling of never-before-seen, [high-resolution sonar imagery](#) of USS *Monitor*.

In partnership with NOAA's *Monitor National Marine Sanctuary* and Northrop Grumman, The Mariners' will reveal stunning new three-dimensional digital reconstructions of *Monitor* as it appeared in 1862, alongside remarkably detailed scans of the wreck as it rests today on the ocean floor.

Captured using an Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle equipped with Northrop Grumman's [micro synthetic aperture sonar \(μSAS™\)](#), the data represents the first fine-scale sonar survey ever produced of *Monitor*. The advanced system penetrates low-visibility conditions to generate extraordinary, high-resolution imagery of the wreck and its surrounding debris field, including detailed views of hull remains and internal structure.

This technological milestone transforms how researchers, historians, and the public can explore and protect one of America's most famous Civil War shipwrecks. As the sanctuary marks its 50th anniversary, the collaboration honors *Monitor*'s legacy by returning to the site with 21st-century tools, expanding opportunities for conservation, education, and engagement in ways never before possible.

"By unveiling this new technology alongside hands-on STEM activities, we're showing the community that history and innovation go hand in hand," said Will Hoffman, Director of Conservation and Chief Conservator. "These experiences provide visitors a new window into the past, enabling people to engage with USS *Monitor* through a different lens, and potentially, drawing in new audiences of all ages to learn about the little ship that saved the nation!"

Guests can dive deeper into this breakthrough during the featured presentation, *Exploring Monitor with 21st-Century Technology*, from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Explorers Theater. Experts from NOAA and Northrop Grumman will share the story behind the mission, unveil the imagery, and explain how this unprecedented technology reshapes our understanding of the ironclad and its historic battle.

Throughout the Museum, families will find a full slate of interactive experiences designed to inspire the next generation of engineers, scientists, and explorers.

Guests can:

- Step into the role of an underwater robot in a life-size sonar and mapping floor game.
- Pilot a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) and test deep-sea navigation skills.
- Solve engineering challenges by building *Monitor*'s iconic turret and cannons using pattern blocks crafted for early learners.
- Experience a virtual swim through the shipwreck using a *Monitor* 360 headset.
- Embark on a *Monitor*-themed scavenger hunt with prizes.

- Meet the Mariners' Team in the galleries to explore powerful stories behind priceless artifacts.
- Tour the Museum's state-of-the-art Wet Lab (1–3 p.m., ages 10+), where *Monitor*'s iconic gun turret and other recovered artifacts are undergoing conservation.
- Attend a lecture highlighting the life and leadership of Rear Admiral John Lorimer Worden, commander of *Monitor* during the Battle of Hampton Roads.

By pairing revolutionary underwater imaging with hands-on STEM experiences, Battle of Hampton Roads Commemoration Day offers a rare opportunity to witness history made visible through innovation.

Interested parties can learn more about the event and register for presentations [online](#). For interview requests or more information about The Mariners' Museum and Park, media should contact Senior Director of Advancement Sabrina Jones at sjones@MarinersMuseum.org or (757) 591-7708.

The Mariners' Museum and Park connects people to the world's waters because through the water – through our shared maritime heritage – we are connected to one another. The organization is an educational, private 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and preserves and interprets maritime history through an international collection of ship models, figureheads, paintings, and other maritime artifacts. The Mariners' Museum® is home to the USS *Monitor* Center, and is surrounded by the 550-acre Mariners' Park, the largest privately owned and maintained park that is free and open to the public in North America. The Mariners' Museum Library is the largest maritime library in the Western hemisphere. Because of the Museum's world-class collection and its reputation for high-level exhibits and programs, in 1998, the U.S. Congress designated The Mariners' Museum as one of only two maritime museums that comprise America's National Maritime Museum. The Museum galleries are open to the general public with \$1 admission, and the Mariners' team will continue to offer FREE virtual programs for those who prefer to engage online with us or through our social media platforms and blog posts. The Mariners' Park and Noland Trail is open for daily use. For additional information, visit MarinersMuseum.org, call (757) 596-2222 or write to The Mariners' Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA 23606.

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