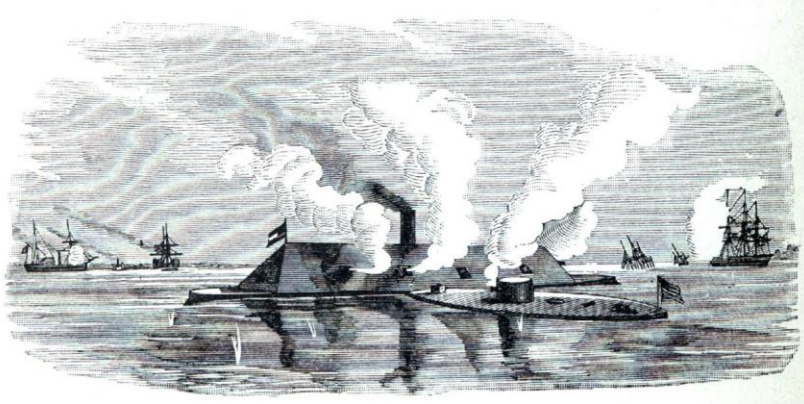


# The Virginia vs. the Monitor - or, Look Out Minnesota!

## By Mike Crane

### The Objectives of the Game

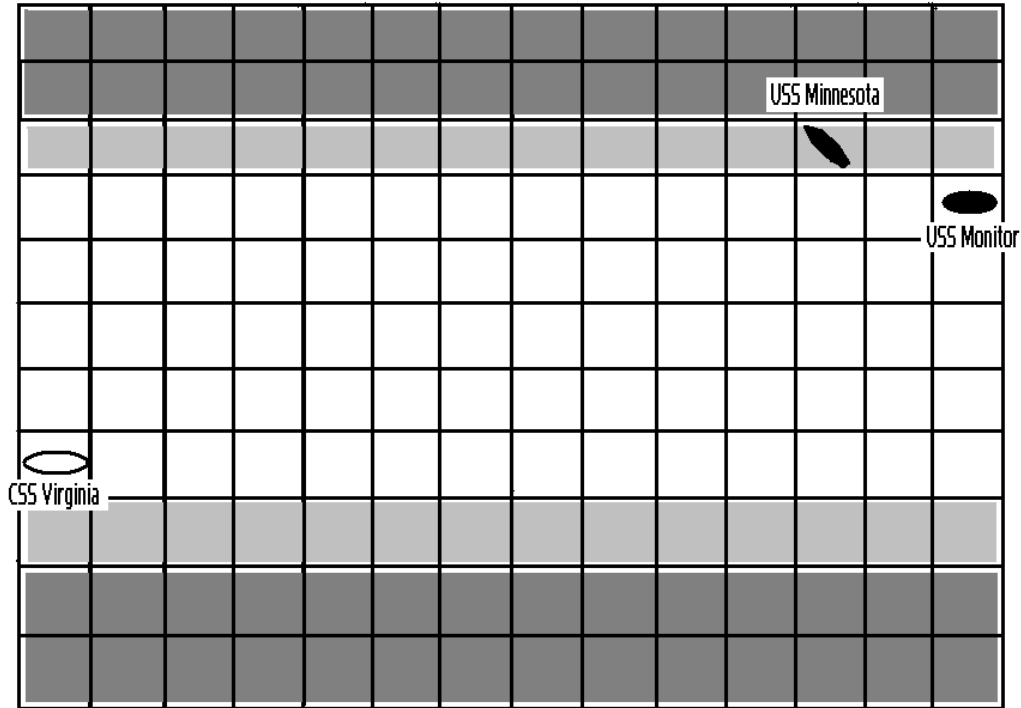
You are the captain of the CSS Virginia and your assignment is (1) to destroy the USS Minnesota, which is grounded and defenseless at Hampton Roads, and (2) to bring the CSS Virginia back to home port. Anything less will be a defeat.



Unfortunately for you, the USS Monitor, a ship resembling a “cheese box on a shingle” has appeared near the Minnesota to thwart your plan. Although the Monitor is smaller than the Virginia, it is equal in firepower, faster, more maneuverable, and has a shallow draft. It is definitely the superior one of the two ships.

### What You Will Need to Play

The playing board is a 28”x 22” piece of blue poster board available at Wal-Mart for 52 cents. Use a pencil and yardstick to divide the light blue side into two-inch squares. Use thin acrylic paint to shade three rows along the top and bottom of the length of the board to represent shallow water mud flats. (See Figure 1.)



**Figure 1. The Playing Board Showing the Shallows and Opening Positions**

Paper models of the ships are provided, but heavier models will look and feel better if you have them. (I made my models of balsa, basswood, and toothpicks.) Larger models may require a larger playing board with larger squares.

Four six-sided dice are used: 1 red action die for the Virginia, 1 blue action die for the Monitor; 1 white hit die; and 1 black damage die. A record sheet has been provided which will allow you to record the damage to ships in seven games. If you can't win in seven games...well, make another sheet.

### Setting Up the Game

Starting at the top right-hand corner, count down 3 squares and over 3 squares to the left. Place the Minnesota here. She is grounded in shallow water and her bow should be pointing toward the top edge of the board. Since she is grounded, she will not fire during the game. Next, count 4 squares down from the upper right-hand corner and place the Monitor on this square. Now count up 4 squares from the lower left-hand corner and place the Virginia on this square. (See Figure 1). The Virginia will start the game by rolling the first action die. The Virginia will end the game either by sinking or by crossing the left edge of the playing board.

### How the Game Works

This game uses action points (AP's) for moving and firing. Each ship receives AP's by rolling a red or blue action die at the beginning of each turn and consulting the Action Point Chart. All of the AP's must be used before the end of the turn. AP's cannot be left unused and cannot be saved for the following turn.

## **ACTION POINT CHART**

*Roll 1 red or blue d6*

6 = 4 Action Points

4, 5 = 3 Action Points

1, 2, 3 = 2 Action Point

## **Moving and Firing**

All of the AP's may be used for moving, or moving may be alternated with firing. Moving 1 square or firing 1 volley will cost 1 AP each.

A ship may fire only at a target in an adjoining square.

Firing will be preceded or followed by a ship move. For example, a ship with 2 AP's could move and fire or fire and move; a ship with 3 AP's could move, fire, and move; or, fire, move, and fire; etc.

Only the Virginia may fire twice in succession. It must be in contact with both the Minnesota and the Monitor and have 3 AP's or more to fire twice and move once.

To fire, roll the white d6, apply the modification if necessary, and find the result on the To Hit Chart. The only modification is -2 for the heavy armor of the two ironclads. The Minnesota is unarmored and the firing roll is unmodified against it.

## **TO HIT CHART**

*Roll 1 white d6*

3,4,5,6 = Hit

1,2 = Miss

Modification: Target has heavy armor -2 from roll

When a hit is scored, roll the black d6 and consult the Effect of Hit Chart for the resulting damage.

## **EFFECT OF HIT CHART**

*Roll 1 black d6*

6 = 3 Damage Points

5 = 2 Damage Points

2, 3, 4 = 1 Damage Point

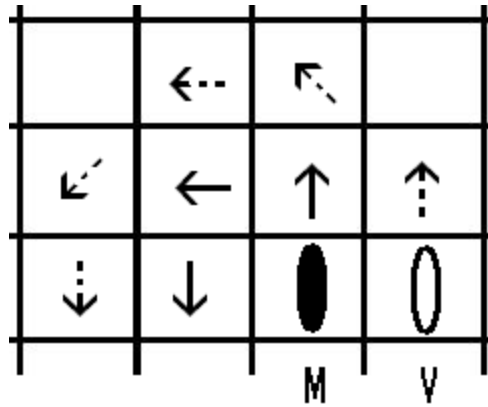
1 = No Effect

Put a check in a box on the Record Sheet for each damage point a ship receives. When all of the boxes have been filled, the ship has been sunk.

The USS Monitor has 5 boxes, the USS Minnesota has 3 boxes, and the CSS Virginia has 10 boxes.

## **Speed and Maneuvering Capabilities**

The Monitor is faster and much more maneuverable than the Virginia. Combined with the moveable gun turret, these factors allowed the Monitor to fire more volleys than the slower-moving Virginia. In addition to the number rolled on the action die, the Monitor will receive a bonus of +1 AP each turn to indicate its faster speed. The Monitor will also be allowed to make 90° turns while the Virginia is only allowed to make 45° turns. (See Figure 2.)



**Figure 2. The Turning Radii of the USS Monitor and the CSS Virginia.**

To provide a small degree of balance to the game, the Monitor has only half as many damage boxes (5) as the Virginia (10).

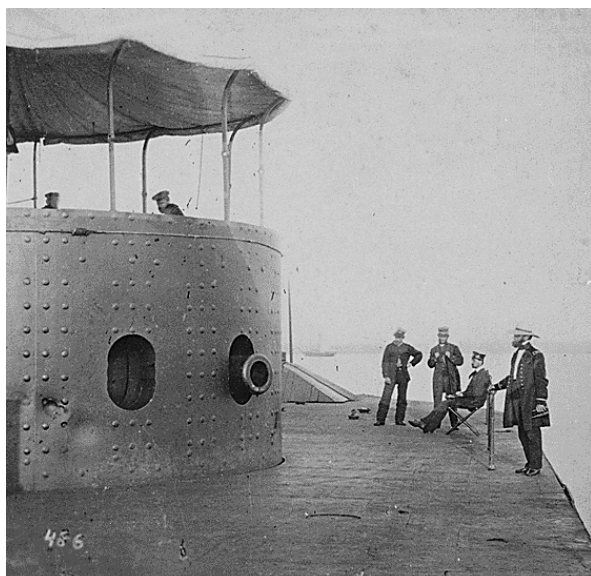
### Getting Stuck and Unstuck in the Mudflats

The ships may try to maneuver their opponents into the mud banks on the edges of the board. Or, the captain may consider the chance for attack or escape to be worth the risk of entering shallow water. Three rows of squares on each side of the length of the board represent the shallows. (See Figure 1.) The Monitor has a shallow draft and only the two rows near the edge are dangerous to it. All three rows of shallow water are dangerous to the Virginia.

If a ship enters a shallow area that is dangerous to it, 1 AP must be spent to roll 1d6: 1-3 = the ship is stuck; 4-6 = the ship is not stuck and moves to another square in or, if possible, out of the shallow water. A ship will not fire while in dangerous shallow water.

If a ship becomes stuck, it may continue to use all of its remaining AP's to free itself. If it is stuck without AP's, it must wait until the next turn to try again.

A ship may not fire while stuck. It may fire again after it has become unstuck and moved out of the dangerous shallow water.



### Planning Your Tactics

The Virginia has several options: a stand-up slugfest; shoot and run; run and dodge, or a combination of all above. That will be for you to decide. Each plan can win if the dice fall right, but always remember—you have two objectives and the Monitor has but one.

Good luck, Captain! You will need it.



## Resource References

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