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## The War Fifty Years Ago

Exploits of the New Ironclad Monitor Montauk Below  
Charleston---Captain J. L. Worden, Hero of the  
Original Monitor, In Command---Gallant Attack on  
Fort McAllister---The Ironclad Runs Close In and  
Withstands the Fire For Hours---Shots From Ten  
Inch Guns Roll Off From Her Plates, Leaving No  
Dent---The Famous Confederate Cruiser Nashville  
Destroyed by the Montauk With Hot Shot.

By Captain GEO. L. KILMER, Late U. S. V.  
On the 28th of February, 1863,  
Captain John L. Worden, the  
hero of the Monitor-Merrimac  
battle, won fresh laurels with  
a new and improved type of ironclad.  
While attacking Fort McAllister, Ga.,  
with the Montauk, one of Captain Er-  
fesson's later creations in ironclads, he  
incidentally wiped out with hot shot  
the Confederate steamer Nashville, the  
first cruiser put afloat by the south.

Worden's personal injuries in the  
fight with the Merrimac, March 9,  
1862, had disabled him for several  
months. He joined Rear Admiral S. F.  
Dupont's south Atlantic squadron in

fort, and perhaps the third would not  
have been attempted but for the fact  
that while reconnoitering with a view  
to catch the Nashville on Feb. 27,  
when there was a dense fog over the  
river, he saw the cruiser aground  
above the batteries. Before the first  
attack the Confederate range marks  
for the gunners in the fort were skill-  
fully removed by a party of Federals  
in boats. Then the Montauk steamed  
up to within 150 yards of the obstruc-  
tions and threw out her anchors as a  
challenge for a gun duel.

Like the original Monitor, the Mont-  
auk's deck was almost wholly sub-  
merged, and the enemy found her a



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FORT McALLISTER, A GUARDIAN OF CHARLESTON.

January, 1863, with the Montauk and  
lost no time in testing the new war  
engine. Dupont's task was to main-  
tain a blockade against Charleston and  
keep the enemy's ships from carrying  
arms or supplies from England to the  
pent up Confederacy.

Fort McAllister stood at the mouth of  
the Ogeechee river, on the Georgia  
coast, to guard the channel and shield  
the movements of Confederate block-  
ade runners then using that entrance,  
one of the few which the Federals had  
not securely closed. It was at the  
southern extremity of the coast region  
which Dupont was attempting to sub-  
jugate by means of warships.

### The Notorious Cruiser Nashville.

At the time of Worden's arrival the  
Confederate cruiser Nashville was up  
the Ogeechee river, watching for a  
chance to elude Dupont's vigilant fleet  
and get to sea. The ship had already  
made history as a daring blockade run-  
ner. She was a fine, swift side wheel  
steamer, built for trade between New  
York and Charleston.

The Confederates seized her after  
the fall of Sumter, and she was sent  
out as a ship of war, with an arma-  
ment of two twelve-pounder guns and  
a crew of forty men. In October, 1861,  
she ran the Federal blockade out of  
Charleston and won the distinction of  
flying the first Confederate flag in  
British waters. She captured and  
burned a Yankee ship in the entrance  
of the British channel and was held  
under surveillance by the United  
States warship Tuscarora for several  
weeks.

In February, 1862, the Nashville was  
again in American waters and by a  
daring trick ran through the Federal  
blockading fleet into Beaufort, N. C.  
Running the fire of Burnside's block-  
ading ships off Beaufort, she put in at  
Georgetown, S. C., where she was turn-  
ed over to private owners, and under a  
changed name had an exciting career  
as a blockade runner, flying the British  
flag. Finally she was bottled up  
in the Ogeechee by a flotilla of Fed-  
eral gunboats.

While waiting to escape, the vessel  
was overhauled and fitted out for a  
Confederate cruiser under the name  
of the Rattlesnake, but the original  
name of Nashville always clung to her.  
In attempting to run out of the Ogee-  
chee on Feb. 27 she grounded just  
above Fort McAllister.

During the time that the Nashville  
lay up the river Fort McAllister had  
been strengthened in order to make  
the cruiser's hiding secure from the  
Federals, who were watching her. The  
fort itself mounted nine guns. Across  
the channel below a diagonal line of  
plies had been driven and outside of  
them a bed of submarine torpedoes  
carefully laid to catch any ship at-  
tempting to pass the obstructions.

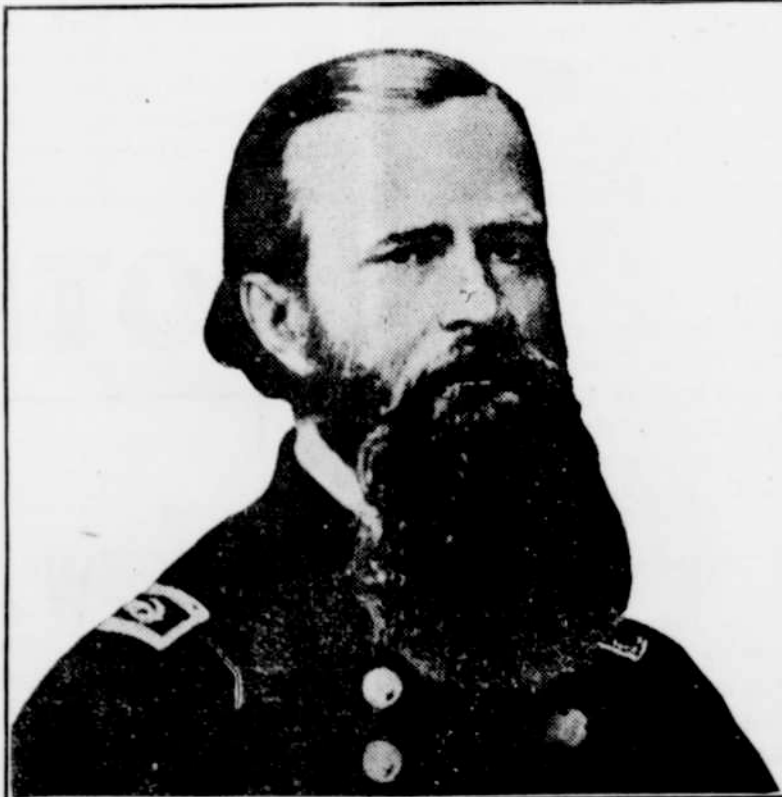
### Challenge to a Gun Duel.

Dupont sent Worden to try his guns  
against the fort as an experiment for  
the new type of monitor, several of  
them having joined his fleet for the  
purpose of attacking Fort Sumter and  
the other fortifications in Charleston  
harbor. Worden would have taken in  
the original monitor, but she had gone  
down at sea on the trip from Fortress  
Mouroe.

Worden made three dashes at the

very small target. She lay close un-  
der the fort for four hours and em-  
ptied her shell chests upon the works  
without doing the enemy any harm so  
far as could be seen by a glass. Com-  
ing out of her first scrimmage wholly  
uninjured, although the enemy's gun-  
ners landed many shots against her  
iron sides, the Montauk only waited  
to refill her magazines and then boldly  
started in again.

This time she anchored within 1,000  
yards of the enemy's guns, directly op-  
posite an eight inch columbiad. Tak-  
ing the gun chamber of the columbiad  
for his principal target, Worden bom-  
arded it fiercely with his eleven inch



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CAPTAIN J. L. WORDEN, U. S. N., COMMANDER OF THE MONTAUK

and fifteen inch guns, the armament of  
the Montauk being one of each.

The first gun of the monitor was  
fired at 7:45 o'clock in the morning.  
At 8:30 o'clock a shell aimed at the  
columbiad struck a thirty-two pounder  
gun near the columbiad, killing the  
gun chief, Major Gallie, who stood by  
encouraging his men. Worden's heavy  
shells razed the parapet in front of  
the guns of the fort, leaving the men  
in the batteries very much exposed,  
but they kept up a hot fire on the Mon-  
tauk, moving their pieces from point  
to point to baffle the Federal marksmen.

### Big Shot Strike the Montauk.

Although the Montauk stood farther  
off in this attack than during the pre-  
vious one, she was struck oftener, re-  
ceiving forty-one shots in all. Many  
of the missiles were ten inch, but they  
rolled off from the iron plates, leaving  
scarcely a dent.

When Worden steamed the Montauk  
up in front of Fort McAllister early on  
the morning of Feb. 28 a fog still hung  
over the water, and, the tide being fa-  
vorable, he anchored within 800 yards  
of the enemy's guns. At the same

time three wooden gunboats and a  
mortar boat sent by Dupont to support  
the attack took station near the moni-  
tor and opened upon the fort. The Con-  
federate cruiser Nashville lay stranded  
1,200 yards from the monitor be-  
yond a marsh of tall canes. The up-  
per decks of the cruiser were visible  
from the turret of the monitor.

The moment his wooden consort  
opened upon the fort Worden trained  
his guns upon the Nashville. The  
cruiser had often been sighted before  
by Federal ships when they were rec-  
onnoitering around the fort and had al-  
ways eluded capture and battle by  
fleeing up the river. Worden deter-  
mined to finish her now that she lay  
at his mercy before she could float and  
get back up the river.

All the guns of the fort poured their  
eight inch and ten inch shots upon the  
Montauk, but Worden ignored them en-  
tirely, and in turn the Confederate gun-  
ners ignored the wooden ships. Only  
one shot from the fort struck the gun-  
boat. That was from a thirty-two  
pounder and did but little damage.

The fire of the fort upon the monitor  
was fast and furious, but the gunners  
were evidently excited and desperate,  
for out of the hundreds aimed at the  
Montauk only five found the little tar-  
get. Worden got accurate range on  
the Nashville in spite of the fog. He  
was as close as it was safe to go.

### Shells Set the Nashville Afire.

The first few shells of the Montauk  
set the cruiser on fire in the wooden  
upper works, and about that time the  
fog grew denser, completely shutting  
off the view from the Federal gunners.  
Still they continued firing, according  
to the direction and elevation already  
obtained.

It was just twenty minutes after  
Worden fired his first shot when the  
flames burst out on the Nashville.  
Then thirty minutes of dense fog in-  
tervened, and at the end of fifty min-  
utes, the fog clearing, it was seen that  
the fire had increased. A pivot gun  
mounted abaft the mainmast of the  
burning cruiser exploded from the in-  
tense heat, and a few minutes later her  
smokestack disappeared under a good  
shot from the turret of the Montauk.

The flames soon reached the maga-  
zine of the ship, which exploded with  
tremendous force, leaving the cruiser  
a smoking ruin. When the Nashville's  
magazine exploded the Federal vessels  
ceased firing and dropped down the  
river, followed by random shots from  
the fort.

During his many trips up to the fort  
in the Montauk Worden had passed the  
Confederate torpedoes going and  
coming without meeting with harm,  
but in his last withdrawal the monitor  
ran upon one, which stove a great hole  
in her side below the water line. The  
Confederates in the fort had seen the  
monitor pass and reposs the torpedoes  
harmlessly so often that they gave no  
attention to her as she dropped away  
down the channel. Besides, the fog  
hid her from view of the fort, and  
Worden succeeded in beaching her out  
of sight of the enemy.

In a few days the wound was repair-  
ed by bolting a piece of boiler iron over  
the gap, and the Montauk went back to  
her station on the blockade, doubly a

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