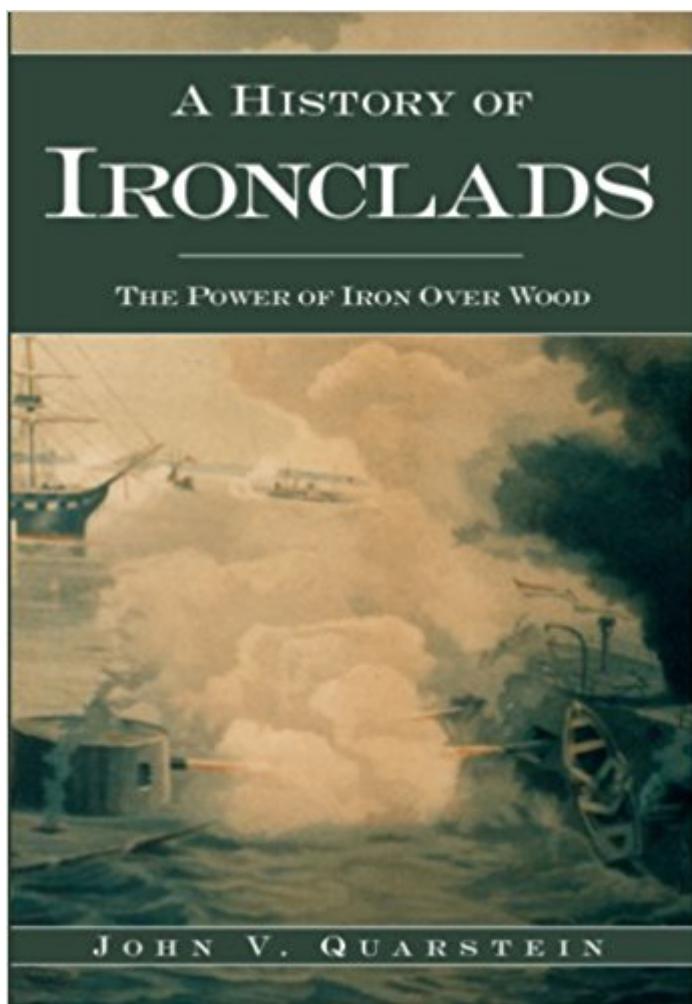


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A History Of Ironclads: The Power Of Iron Over Wood



Synopsis

One of history's greatest naval engagements, the Battle of Hampton Roads, occurred on March 8 and 9, 1862. On the first morning, the Confederate ironclad the CSS Virginia, formerly known as the Merrimack, sank two Union wooden warships, proving the power of the armored vessels over the traditional sailing ships. The next morning, the Virginia engaged the Union ironclad USS Monitor to a draw in a battle that significantly altered naval warfare. It was the first engagement between ironclads and ushered in a new era of warship construction and ordnance. The 25, 000 sailors, soldiers and civilians who witnessed the battle knew then what history would soon confirm: wars waged on the waters would never be the same. The seemingly invincible Monitor and Virginia were experimental ships, revolutionary combinations of new and old technology, and their clash on March 9, 1862, was the culmination of over 2, 000 years of naval experience. The construction and combat service of ironclads during the Civil War were the first in a cascade of events that influenced the outcome of the war and prompted the development of improved ironclads as well as the creation of new weapons systems, such as torpedoes and submarines, needed to counter modern armored warships.

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: The History Press (February 28, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1596291184

ISBN-13: 978-1596291188

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 0.3 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.8 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #842,096 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Naval Operations #610 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Military History #1688 in Books > History > Military > Naval

Customer Reviews

John V. Quarstein is an award-winning historian, preservationist, lecturer and author. He served as director of the Virginia War Museum for over thirty years and, after retirement, continues to work as a historian for the city of Newport News. He is in demand as a speaker throughout the nation.

Quarstein is the author of fourteen books, including the companion volume to The CSS Virginia, The

Monitor Boys. He has produced, narrated and written six PBS documentaries, including the Civil War in Hampton Roads series, which was awarded a 2007 Silver Telly. John Quarstein is the recipient of over twenty national and state awards, such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy's Jefferson Davis Gold Medal in 1999. Besides his lifelong interest in Tidewater Virginia history, Quarstein is an avid duck hunter and decoy collector. He lives on Old Point Comfort in Hampton, Virginia, and on his family's Eastern Shore farm near Chestertown, Maryland.

I'm not a hardcore naval history buff, but I found this book to be extremely disappointing (returned it the next day). It's more of brief (very, very, very brief) history of ironclads in a chronological format, without any meat or details to it (3-4 sentences each??). Had I known it was so thin on historical details, I definitely would not have purchased this product. It would have been nice to pick a few of the more interesting ironclads in the period and give it some more substance. I normally do not write product reviews (who has the time?), but this product left a lot to be desired. Anyway, sorry to give a negative review...

The story of the battle between the USS Monitor and the Merrimack (CSS Virginia) at the Battle of Hampton Roads is well known as the battle where iron armored ships signaled the end of the era of wooden ships. From this battle on, ships would be made of iron (and later steel) with their guns mounted in turrets would rule the waves until they too met their match at places like Pearl Harbor. But as usually happens with technology, there are few secrets. The engineers in the North and the South began developing ironclads, as well as more effective canon and shells. This excellent book gives the overall history of the ironclads on both sides. This includes the river fleet under Grant in his battles on the western rivers as well as the ones in the east. In two appendices, the author lists 34 named Confederate ironclads (six more were started but never named), and 83 Union (some of which were so bad that they while they were built, they were never commissioned into the Navy). The book concentrates on the ironclads of the American Civil War, as this was the time when they were being invented and first used. It uses an interesting format of a chronological history combined with essays discussing some particular point of interest. There is some additional material at the beginning and end of the book on earlier and later activities to place the Civil War into some perspective. All in all, a well researched book that provides a more complete story than I've seen before.

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