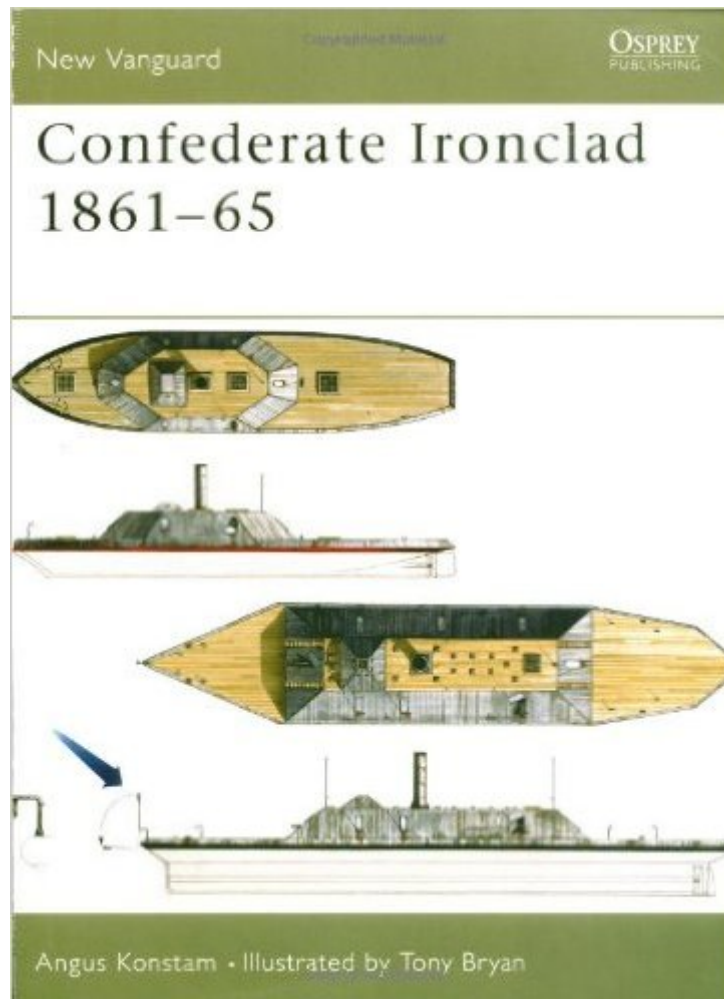


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Confederate Ironclad 1861-65 (New Vanguard)



Synopsis

The creation of a Confederate ironclad fleet was a miracle of ingenuity, improvisation and logistics. Surrounded by a superior enemy fleet, Confederate designers adapted existing vessels or created new ones from the keel up with the sole purpose of breaking the naval stranglehold on the nascent country. Her ironclads were built in remote cornfields, on small inland rivers or in naval yards within sight of the enemy. The result was an unorthodox but remarkable collection of vessels, which were able to contest the rivers and coastal waters of the South for five years. This title explains how these vessels worked, how they were constructed, how they were manned and how they fought.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This short book packs a maximum of information into a minimum of pages. Without wasted words, every aspect of Confederate ironclads is covered: design, construction, armor, armament, life on board, strategy, tactics, and actual combat actions. Nor is analysis lacking. The author contends that the casemate ironclad was the best design possible given the Confederate resources available, and after switching doctrine from one of expecting the ironclads to break the blockade to one of having them defend vital ports, they performed their function well. As is usual with Osprey, the book contains many diagrams, photographs, and color artwork, including a cutaway drawing of CSS Virginia. Information about the 22 ironclads actually commissioned is assembled in an appendix, but any put under construction are mentioned somewhere, including CSS Stonewall, a non-casemate

ironclad built in France. The only misprint I noticed was in the appendix where CSS Huntsville is spelt "Husville". The book is suitable for those just starting to learn about Confederate ironclads, and old hands who want a quick reference available.

Angus Konstam is an English naval historian with a wide range of interests from 20th century military ships to the American Civil War navies. This short book of only 47 pages has some unusual photographs and facts about the curious Confederate naval vessels. Although there isn't an actual picture of the famous Merrimac, there is a revealing one of the similar Atlanta after it was captured by the Weehauken and Nahant. Near the end are useful statistics on each vessel that was operational. This book is highly recommended for those interested in this subject.

Any mention of the American Civil War will immediately conjure up images of soldiers dressed in the distinctive dark blue or light grey uniforms worn by the opposing sides. Perhaps, outside of the USA, few people might be aware that both sides also had their own formal Navy because the resultant naval engagements are rarely mentioned at all. At that particular time of internal strife within the USA, shipbuilders elsewhere in the world, were moving away from wooden vessels in favour of steel ships and the speed of change in warship design would result in fleets of unimaginable super dreadnought battleships within 50 years. Such development in any country at war with itself, however, is virtually impossible if only because all resources are channelled towards winning that conflict. Nevertheless, both sides within the USA produced some amazing warships during this time and this book covers those which served the Confederate Navy. Providing the reader with one of the finest potted histories I have ever read, author Angus Konstam is equally well supported by the artwork of Tony Bryan who has produced profile and aerial images of those vessels which played a key part in the various battles - some of which have become enshrined in folk-lore. There are also a number of historic photographs. It was the innovative, indeed revolutionary, design of the main superstructure which made many of the Confederate Ironclad vessels seemingly impregnable. Above-deck accommodation - called casemates, was built of wood which was 3 feet thick and covered in two layers of 2 inch steel plate - hence the name "Ironclad". The sides of these casemates sloped backwards at a 35 degree angle so that when they were struck by enemy shot, the incoming projectile glanced off the armour causing barely a scratch. Ports, which could be opened and closed from inside the ship, allowed the ship's own guns to be run out. By comparison, European warship design of the period still retained vertical sides and suffered maximum damage from incoming shot. This is a fascinating and informative book. It is one which sits

very well amongst the remainder of the works in this series and is fully recommended. NM

This is one of several slim volumes devoted to the history of the earliest American iron-clad warships. This volume focuses on the Confederate states approach to developing iron covered ships to aid in their efforts to break the Union naval blockade. The book is full of interesting information on all aspects of the development of Confederate style of early iron-armored battle ships - including not only the original 'Merrimack/Virginia' but also an array of fascinating variations on the theme. The illustrations are particularly nice featuring rare archival photos, period engravings, cut-a-way drawings of the interior workings, and specially commissioned paintings. Highly recommended for those interested in these unusual early fighting ships.

During the Civil War Union forces ran into Confederate ironclads throughout the southern states, everywhere in between the Red River and Norfolk. Reading this book, you get the sense of the Confederate Navy's attempt to provide a uniform set of vessels, well-armed and usually well-armored. These vessels employed a new naval design to try to offset the large number of ships available to the Federal Navy. The book lists the various ironclads commissioned (or being built) and provides rare photos and drawings of these ships. Original artwork enhances this product. The only weakness in the volume is that it doesn't really discuss whether the design had a basis in European thought or if the design was solely the result of Confederate naval architects. I recently visited Kinston NC and saw the full-scale replica of the CSS Neuse there. I wish I had read this book first as I think I would have better appreciated it's design and story.

Excellent examination of the evolution of ironclads in the CSN during the Civil war, accompanied by informative, beautifully executed illustrations.

Fills a big information gap for Confederate ironclads. Not sure I agree with all the illustrator's color choices. It is a good primer though.

I'm writing articles regarding harbor and river battles of the US Civil War. This book and others are great reference books.

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