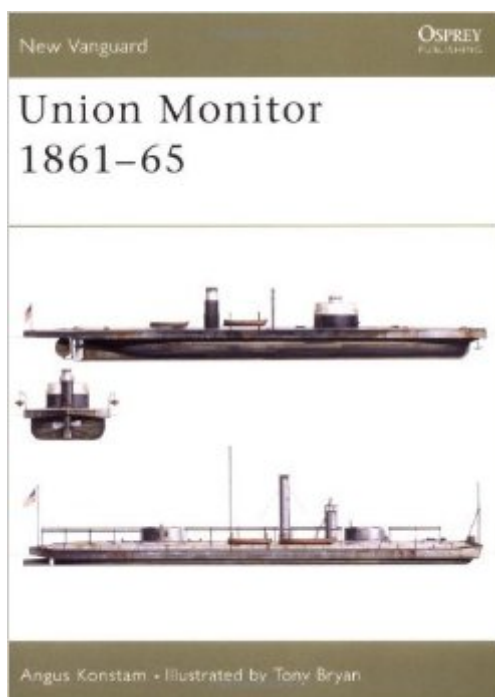


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Union Monitor 1861-65 (New Vanguard)



Synopsis

The first seagoing ironclad was the USS Monitor, and its profile has made it one of the most easily recognised warships of all time. Following her inconclusive battle with the Confederate ironclad Virginia on March 9, 1862, the production of Union monitors was accelerated. By the end of the year a powerful squadron of monitor vessels protected the blockading squadrons off the Southern coastline, and were able to challenge Confederate control of her ports and estuaries. Further technological advancements were included in subsequent monitor designs, and by the end of the war the US Navy possessed a modern coastal fleet carrying the most powerful artillery afloat. This book covers the design, development and operational history of the Union's Monitor fleet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book provides useful information on a subject that has been given little attention by writers: the technical characteristics of the Union's Civil War monitors. This title also covers three other Union non-monitor ironclads that saw service in the eastern theatre, the USS Keokuk, USS Galena, and USS New Ironsides. The illustrations are of good quality, conveying well the subtle differences between the monitor classes. The author demonstrates how "monitor fever" followed the USS Monitor's success at Hampton Roads, leading an over-emphasis on monitors that ignored their serious failings. With a low profile, thick turret armor, and the flexibility of rotating turrets, the monitors were superior to all Confederate ironclads they encountered, but fared less well against forts. And they were seriously unseaworthy, as demonstrated when USS Weehawken sank in only

moderate seas in December, 1863. This title gives some interesting technical details about guns and armor, but less background on the seaworthiness problem. There is little coverage of monitors in action, or the historic influence of monitors on warship design. There are some interesting points about details like the US Navy's preference for reliable, short-ranged smoothbores in monitors rather than longer-ranged, less reliable rifled guns. Like many books in this series, this title is limited by brevity and gives just enough to make you want more.

Here is yet another book on warships in the Civil War by the English naval historian Angus Konstam. It has plentiful pictures and even one of the unusual Roanoke, a three turreted monitor. As is usual in his series, there is a cutaway picture of an important ship in the middle in the book, in this case the Monitor of fame. A lot of research was put into this brief volume of only 47 pages, and many of the pictures were unknown to me. The book is well written and worth buying for those interested in the subject. Also, I liked the accurate paintings by the illustrator Tony Bryan. The main criticism is that he didn't explain much about how the planning and bending machines worked that made the iron sheathing used on the exterior of the ships. He only shows pictures of some that were used. Near the end are valuable specifications on all the classes of ironclads.

This is one of several slim volumes devoted to the history of the earliest American iron-clad warships. This volume focuses on the Monitor class vessel as designed by Swedish inventor John Ericsson for the North. The book is full of interesting information on all aspects of the development of Monitor style of early iron-armored battle ship - including not only the original 'Monitor' but also subsequent multi-turreted versions. 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 fighting ships.

I recently acquired an old stereoscope card of the Monitor at an estate sale, and I realized that other than the bare bones of what I had learned in U.S. History, I knew next to nothing about the history and development of these vessels. This book fills in the gaps nicely. It is illustrated with period photos, and nicely done line drawings that reveal the unseen.

This fills in some of the gaps in my library on the American Civil War Navies, in particular, the Union Navy. This book does help with the background information that I was looking for. I would have liked to see more technical drawings, with dimensions, for building models of these ships. Otherwise, a

good book to read and work with.

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