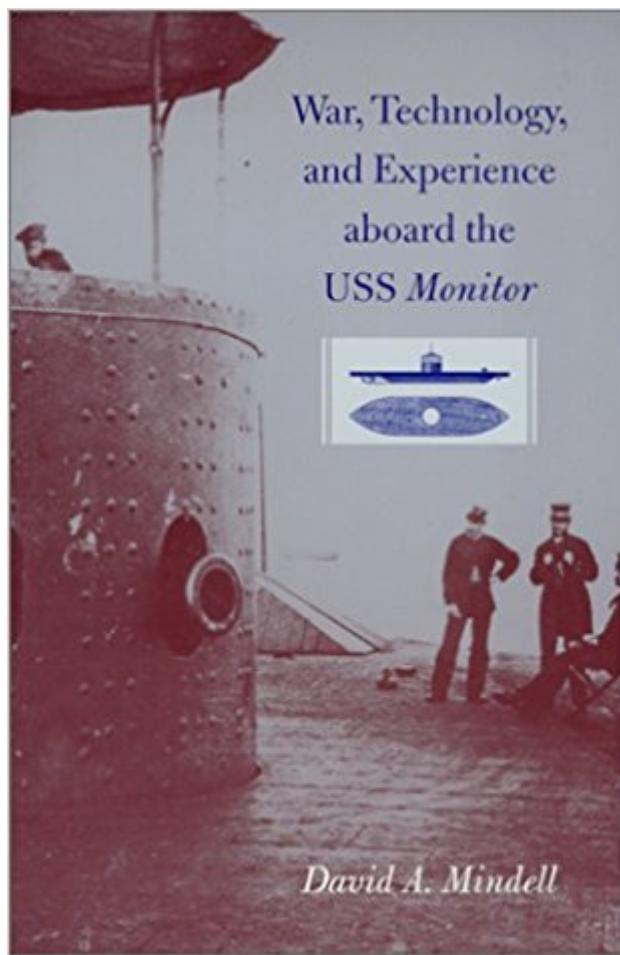


The book was found

War, Technology, And Experience Aboard The USS Monitor



Synopsis

In a familiar story, the USS Monitor battled the CSS Virginia (the armored and refitted USS Merrimack) at Hampton Roads in March of 1862. In *War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor*, David A. Mindell adds a new perspective to the story as he explores how marinersâ •fighting "blindly" below the waterlineâ •lived and coped with the metal monster they called the "iron coffin." Mindell shows how the iron warship emerged as an idea and became practicable, how building it drew upon and forced changes in contemporary manufacturing technology, and how the vessel captured the nineteenth-century American popular and literary imaginations. Combining technical, personal, administrative, and literary analysis, Mindell examines the experience of the men aboard the Monitor and their reactions to the thrills and dangers that accompanied the new machine. The invention surrounded men with iron and threatened their heroism, their self-image as warriors, even their lives. Mindell also examines responses to this strange new warship by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, who prophetically saw in the Civil War a portent of the mechanized warfare of the future. The story of the Monitor shows how technology changes not only the tools but also the very experience of combat, generating effects that are still felt today in the era of "smart bombs" and pushbutton wars. "We find new significance in the otherwise well-known history of the Monitor. It is no longer the story of the heroic inventor and his impenetrable weapon thrusting themselves upon a doubtful and conservative bureaucracy... It is no longer the story of a heroic battle and the machine's epic loss soon after. Rather it is a story of people experiencing new machinery, attempting to make sense of its thrills, constrictions, and politics, and sensing its power and impotenceâ •both in glory and frustration."â •from *War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor*

Book Information

Paperback: 200 pages

Publisher: Johns Hopkins University Press; 1st ed. edition (March 24, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801862507

ISBN-13: 978-0801862502

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #780,246 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 inÂ Books > History >

Customer Reviews

An original and stimulating study that raises serious questions about relations between warriors and their death-dealing machinery. (William J. Astore *War, Literature and the Arts*) Well researched and wide in its scope, this work raises issues that transcend the Civil War and resonate in our own time. (William M. Fowler, Jr. *American Historical Review*) This book offers important new insights into the Monitor as a national icon, the ironclad's association with the modern U.S. Navy, and the evolving role of innovation and heroism in twenty-first-century warfare. (Benjamin H. Trask *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*) Mindell's thought-provoking assessments and conclusions contribute to the understanding of how institutions and societies perceive and react to new technologies. (Choice) Mindell asserts that Monitor's mythical qualities were at least as important as her technological ones... Mindell's scholarly, yet entertaining and very readable book is an excellent and important work that should serve as a model for similar historical studies. (John Broadwater *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*) Mindell provides an intriguing and richly textured analysis that makes effective use of contemporary diaries and other reports. These accounts help Mindell convey the flavor of life aboard the Monitor with candor and insight. (John F. Guilmartin Jr. *Journal of Southern History*) War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor impressed me with its combination of skilled analysis, convincing argument, and elegant prose. This is simply a gem of a book, and promises to be one of those small classics in the history of technology that sets a new standard for how the core questions of the field are framed and addressed. (Robert Friedel, University of Maryland) David Mindell has combined a sensitive and incisive reading of the documentary evidence with insightful historical analysis to illuminate not only his central theme, the experience of battle in an emerging machine age, but also the process of invention, negotiation, and politics that brought the Monitor into existence and the quite different process of narration, memory, and imagination that invested the ship and its exploits so heavily with symbolic meaning. (Bart Hacker, Smithsonian Institution)

"War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor impressed me with its combination of skilled analysis, convincing argument, and elegant prose. This is simply a gem of a book, and promises to be one of those small classics in the history of technology that sets a new standard for how the core questions of the field are framed and addressed." -- Robert Friedel, University of

Maryland --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I had to read this for my history of american technology class, and I have to say I did enjoy it. It goes into detail of how it really affected the lives of the people on the boat, especially like the letters sent from a man on the boat to his wife about the everyday life onboard. I specifically like how it points out the permanent change in battle; no longer do you see the men you kill, no more is the honor of hand-to-hand combat. You fight behind plates of steel, and don't look the man you fight with in the eye. It's not about the layout of the USS Monitor, it's about how it was a turning point in war technology. I recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn a bit about US history, without getting too technical for the common non-history guru person.

I like to read about the civil war and any thing on ships. I love to read about the past history on town and cities. Of course the western days and the early days of the automobiles.

One reviewer called this book, "a gem of a book... promises to be one of those small classics in the history of technology that sets a new standard for how the core questions of the field are framed and addressed." Right on! It's also a small classic in that it brings carefully documented history in the reach of the ordinary literate reader. This book is so well written that it reads like an adventure story rather than a dry history. It also debunks the myths about the Monitor that we learned as children, showing that the designer, the seamen, the politicians all contributed in their own ways to the myths. By referring to the diaries of one of the officers of the ship, the book brings every detail to rich and human life. We share the insights of the famous political and literary figures of the day, from Abraham Lincoln to Nathaniel Hawthorne to Herman Melville. We learn what really happened at Hampton Roads and what it all means for us today. And we learn about how "Smart weapons displace heroism from the field to the laboratory, from warriors to engineers, and from spectacle to secrecy." Everyone interested in the history of technology, the history of war, and the ways writers interpret events of the day will want to read this fine little book.

The book was a bit too dry at times. But the overall story is quite amazing. I read it for class and found myself enjoying the read. So if you are at all interested in this time period, this is a good book!

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