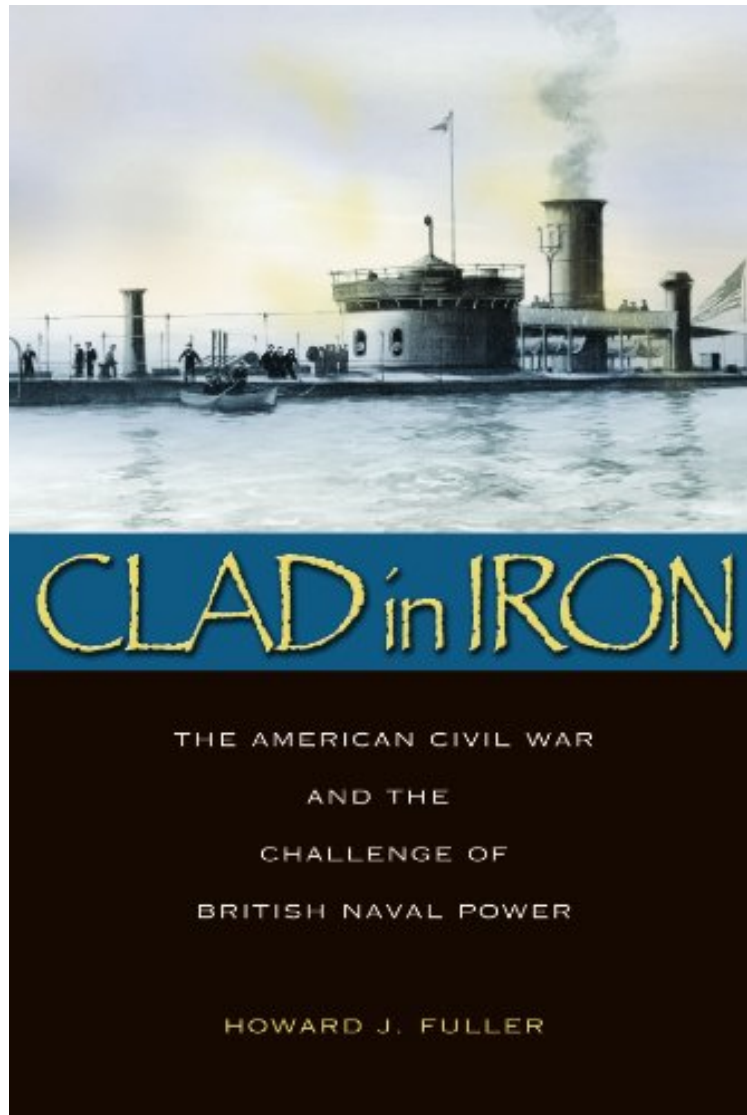


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Clad in Iron: The American Civil War and the Challenge of British Naval Power

Howard J. Fuller

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Howard J. Fuller : Clad in Iron: The American Civil War and the Challenge of British Naval Power before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Clad in Iron: The American Civil War and the Challenge of British Naval Power:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. TOO LONG A VOYAGE By Michael A. Mendelson More thesis than a well focused contribution to an area already rife with many technology and battle books. The premise here is a

supposed comparison between British and U.S. foreign policy with the "iron clad" as the lynchpin, i.e. U.S. v Britain and the Confederacy and Britain v. the U.S. and France. The fundamental premise fails; first, as the "Trent" affair demonstrated, the U.S. pursued an avowedly "one war at a time" foreign policy; second, the U.S., unlike Britain, did not have an overseas empire to tend to and; third, unlike France and Britain, the U.S. was not yet practicing "gun boat" diplomacy. Ultimately, America had other uses for its post war iron--- rails for "manifest destiny". Failure of the fundamental premise turns this work into a sort of alternative history of monitor class vessels and its comparison to British vessels. This work includes numerous "Summaries" to insure clarity because of book's length and ceaseless use of quotations. May be the Summaries should have been the book. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. New fact-based analysis after 150 years, and the best-ever pro/con on the Monitor System vs. casemate ironclads. By ReadsALot Fuller's book is not for the casual Civil War reader, but for the most serious student of 19th century steam and iron naval history. First, though, you might read the general catalog works on US ironclads (Canney and Silverstone), take in Baxter's classic, and digest the first 29 chapters of Bennett's "Steam Navy". If you still have a thirst for the subject, you are ready to appreciate this book, Fuller's master work on the first decade of ironclad development. Fuller pulls no punches in pointing out defects in Baxter's study, and populates his narrative with a wealth of technical detail and political context. I agree that Fuller requires your full attention; I had to reread a number of long sentences (mostly those including contemporary quotes) to be sure of his point. But, boy is it worth the patience! There is barely a page without some nugget on ironclad design or performance. This is a great, crunchy meal of a book! And, while other reviewers disdain the 70-page Notes section, I found it to be a spectacular dessert to the main course. Oh, the research he did!! 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The other side of the pond By T. Stibal This book puts the American Civil War's naval expansion in context with the concurrent activities of European navies. While the Union was busy bringing the South to heel, Britain and France were locked in the first arms race of the Steam Age. And, most of the decisions taken by the Royal Navy were made with one wary eye on what Cousin Jonathan was doing across the pond. This relatively dry account looks at the Royal Navy's concerns and reactions to America's first ironclads. Dealing more with political and economic realities than nuts and bolts naval issues, the author details the serious concerns that Union ironclads caused at Whitehall, and how the British industrial complex dealt with each of them as they arose. He also puts much more light on how Captain Cowper Coles raised the hackles of the powers that were. The usual suspects are here - the French under Napoleon III, along with Captain Coles and the usual "hide bound" Royal Navy "reactionaries" (who weren't quite as reactionary as some might think. But, while the whole story is laid out in some detail, there's not the usual "battle centric" sort of material beloved by many military history "buffs". Unless you are as comfortable with budgeting and political maneuvering as you are with handspikes and powder smoke, you should probably steer clear of this one.

The relatively unknown 'Cold War' of the American Civil War was a nevertheless crucial aspect of the survival, or not, of the United States in the mid 19th-century. Foreign intervention--explicitly in the form of British naval power--represented a far more serious threat to the success of the Union blockade, the safety of Yankee merchant shipping worldwide, and Union combined operations against the South than the Confederate States Navy. Whether or not the North or South would be 'clad in iron' thus depended on the ability of superior Union ironclads to deter the majority of mid-Victorian British leaders, otherwise tempted by their desire to see the American 'experiment' in democratic class-structures and popular government finally fail. Discussions of open European involvement in the Civil War were pointless as long as the coastline of the United States was virtually impregnable. The most famous warship of the American Civil War, the USS Monitor, was the front-line weapon in a grand strategic initiative established by the U.S. Government (the White House, Congress and the Navy Department) as a means of insuring the ultimate defeat of the Southern Confederacy through not only the blockade but isolation from possible foreign aid and intervention. Union ironclads were designed, approved and constructed for the specific purpose, first and last, of deterring and/or destroying the great broadside-ironclads being fashioned by European powers?especially Great Britain. As such, this work addresses many persistent misconceptions of what the monitors were for, and why they failed in other roles associated with naval operations of the Civil War (such as the repulse at Charleston, 7 April, 1863). Monitors were ironclad?not fort?killers. Their ultimate success is to be measured not in terms of spearheading attacks on fortified Southern ports, but in the quieter, much more profound, strategic deterrence of Lord Palmerston's ministry in London, and the British Royal Navy. Combining extensive archival research on both sides of the Atlantic, this work offers an in-depth look at how the Union Navy achieved its greatest grand-strategic victory in the American Civil War. Through a combination of high-tech 'machines' armed with 'monster' guns, intensive coastal fortifications and a new fleet of high-speed Union commerce raiders, the North was able to turn the humiliation of the Trent Affair of late 1861 into a sobering challenge to British naval power and imperial defense worldwide.

The US Civil War witnessed new engines of war, some of the most powerful of which were naval guns mounted on shallow draft, armor-protected warships. Most prominent were the monitors. Deployment of these vessels in inshore waters changed naval warfare and gave the Federal Navy advantage over the Confederacy. The naval construction

program of the Federal Navy had marked influence in Great Britain, where naval architects and gunnery experts pondered the influence such new mechanisms would have in their own narrow seas. France took a similar interest, causing Britain anguish. But the British Admiralty realized that the Royal Navy could not blockade US ports if war broke out with the US: ironclads in brown water could ruin British naval supremacy. Based on various documentary troves in the US and Britain, this work seeks to compare and contrast the influence that new technological innovation had on the emerging US power at sea and the reactions of the British government, Parliament, and Admiralty. Choice Between 1860 and 1863, British and American navies faced a technological revolution in ship construction amidst a "cold war" with the Trent crisis, British aid to the South, and fears of a blockade felt by Northern cities. Dr. Fuller provides a detailed description of the players--private engineers, admiralty, contractors, Department of the Navy, departments and officers, diplomats, and politicians--on both sides of the Atlantic....[T]he book should be of interest to anyone concerned with handling technological change, contracting, deterrance, the effect of political oversight, publicity, and the maneuvering of statesman during a time of crisis. Catholic Library World --Choice "Howard Fuller does much more than illuminate the technological advances in 19th-century navies, he places those advances within a political, diplomatic, and professional context. In doing so, he has greatly expanded our understanding of how technology influences history." (Craig Symonds, Professor Emeritus, U.S. Naval Academy, and author of *Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles that Shaped American History*)

About the Author Howard Fuller is Senior Lecturer of War Studies in the Department of History as well as a Core Member of the History and Governance Research Institute (HAGRI)'s Conflict Studies Research Group at the University of Wolverhampton. He specializes in Anglo-American 19th-century history, particularly the American Civil War and the British Empire. He lives in the U.K.