



Iron Coffin: War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor (Johns Hopkins Introductory Studies in the History of Technology)

David A. Mindell

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The USS *Monitor* famously battled the CSS *Virginia* (the armored and refitted USS *Merrimack*) at Hampton Roads in March 1862. This updated edition of David A. Mindell's classic account of the ironclad warships and the human dimension of modern warfare commemorates the 150th anniversary of this historic encounter.

Mindell explores how mariners fighting "blindly," below the waterline lived in and coped with the metal monster they called the "iron coffin." He investigates how the ironclad technology, new to war in the nineteenth century, changed not only the tools but also the experience of combat and anticipated today's world of mechanized, pushbutton warfare.

The writings of William Frederick Keeler, the ship's paymaster, inform much of this book, as do the experiences of everyman sailor George Geer, who held Keeler in some contempt. Mindell uses their compelling stories, and those of other shipmates, to recreate the thrills and dangers of living and fighting aboard this superweapon.

Recently, pieces of the *Monitor* wreck have been raised from their watery grave, and with them, information about the ship continues to be discovered. A new epilogue describes the recovery of the *Monitor* turret and its display at the USS *Monitor* Museum in Newport News, Virginia.

This sensitive and enthralling history of the USS *Monitor* ensures that this fateful ship, and the men who served on it, will be remembered for generations to come.

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