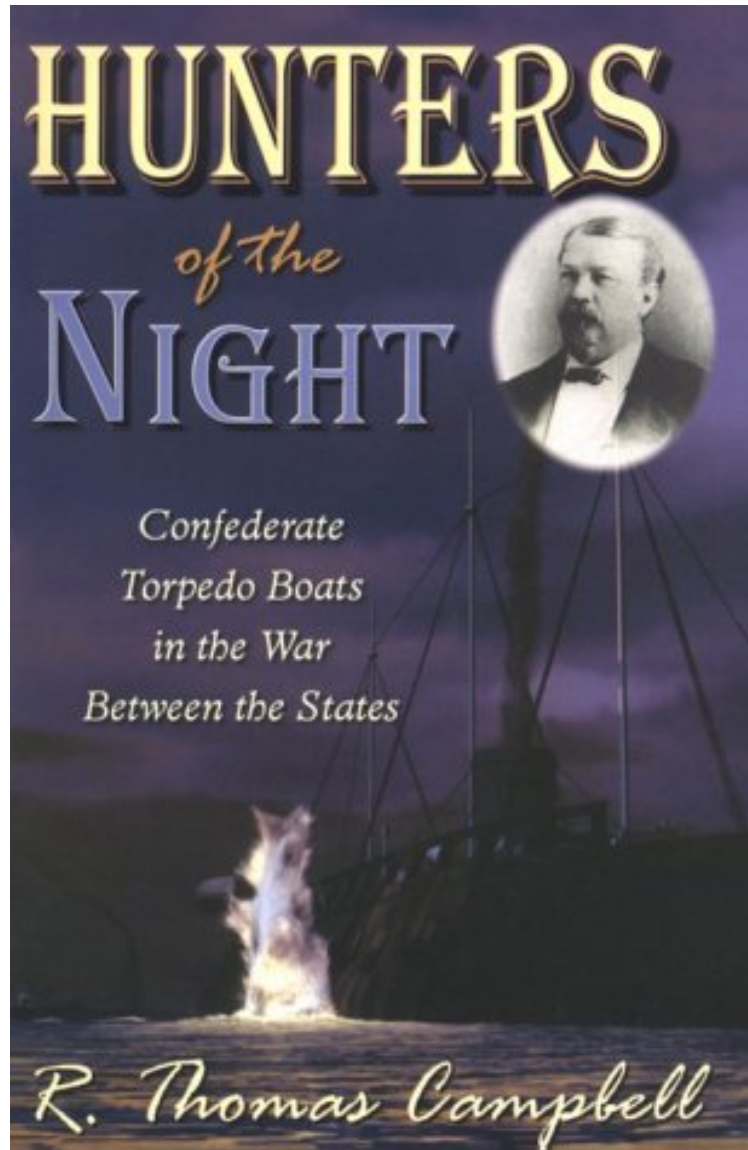


(Download ebook) Hunters of the Night: Confederate Torpedo Boats in the War Between the States

## Hunters of the Night: Confederate Torpedo Boats in the War Between the States

*R. Thomas Campbell*

*ebooks | Download PDF | \*ePub | DOC | audiobook*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#3430056 in Books Burd Street Pr 2000-06-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 .59 x 6.01 x 9.04l, .70  
#File Name: 1572492023190 pages | File size: 77.Mb

**R. Thomas Campbell : Hunters of the Night: Confederate Torpedo Boats in the War Between the States** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hunters of the Night: Confederate Torpedo Boats in the War Between the States:

9 of 12 people found the following review helpful. The only in-depth study of Confederate Torpedo BoatsBy A

Customer Joseph A. Derie - Civil War News - Prolific Confederate naval historian R. Thomas Campbell has turned his efforts to writing about the torpedo boats of the Confederate States Navy (and Army). These evolved when the South attempted to find ways to use torpedoes—which we would call mines today—as an offensive weapon. Originally the torpedoes were kegs or casks, waterproofed, and either secured to the bot-tom or buoyed, filled with explosives and armed with a fuse set to explode when a ship's hull brushed against it. An attempt to use them offensively was made by securing two torpedoes together with a piece of line about 200 feet long, then rowing to a point some distance above an enemy vessel and releasing the two torpedoes to drift with the current. The idea was for the line between the torpedoes to be snagged by the vessel and for one or both of the torpedoes to swing against the hull. This was tried against Union warships in Hampton Roads in October 1861, without success. Captain Francis D. Lee, a Confederate Army engineer working on chemical fuses for torpedoes in Charleston, thought that the best way to use the torpedo offensively would be to mount it on a spar forward of the bow of a boat and deliver it by ramming it into the side of its target. This vessel would obviously be a torpedo ram or torpedo boat. He convinced General Beauregard this was the type of quick, easy to build weapon the Confederates needed to defend Charleston Harbor against the vastly superior federal fleet and the Confederate torpedo boat program was born. The initial type of torpedo boat was a rowboat or launch. Later, specially designed models were developed, powered by steam, either with an open deck (CSS Squib class) or partially covered with wood or iron (CSS Torch class), and designed to ride low in the water to make them hard to detect. The other type was the David, a semi-submersible, with a cylindrical hull that was ballasted by iron or by water (via pumps) enabling them to ride low in the water. These came in a number of models with various sized torpedoes. Most were about five feet in diameter and about 48 feet long with a 14 foot long spar for the torpedo. However, one captured at the end of the war was 160 feet long and 11.5 feet in diameter. Davids were generally powered by steam but a few were powered by oars or a screw turned by the crew. The latter was also the propulsion system of a fully submersible torpedo boat, the Hunley, which is not part of this story. Confederate successes with torpedo boats were few. The USS New Ironsides was severely damaged and had to be dry-docked by an attack from the original David. Unfortunately, the torpedo struck right at the bulkhead, which prevented the ship from sinking. The CSS Squib slightly damaged the USS Minnesota. Ironically, the most successful and famous torpedo boat attack was Commander William B. Cushing's destruction of the CSS Albemarle. The torpedo boats' prime contribution to the Confederate war effort was the fear they struck in the Union Navy, and the actions taken to guard against such attacks. In an appendix there is a wonderful statement by Commander William T. Glassell, the commander of the CSS David the night it damaged the USS New Ironsides. Writing after the war he described "the ironclad vessels of that fleet enveloped like women in hoopskirt petticoats of netting, to lay in idle admiration of themselves for many months." The book is very well illustrated with drawings and many pictures of torpedo boats and spar torpedoes. It is highly recommended for those with an interest in the Confederate Navy and general readers will also find it worthwhile. 8 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Hunters of the Night By Ralph Green As used during the War Between the States, the term "torpedo" meant any underwater explosive device. Torpedo boats were any and all of the various designs employed to deliver the devices to the side of enemy vessels. This is the history of the design, manufacture and utilization of such boats. Unfortunately, the Confederate leadership failed to recognize the real value of this new weapon. Although the building of these boats was authorized early in the war, the actual building of them was often hindered by officials who failed to recognize their potential value. However, when available, these relatively speedy boats proved that by operating within the cover of darkness they could bring fear and destruction to a strategically overpowering and more numerous foe. They caused many a Union sailor to lie awake wondering if the bump he had just heard was a log hitting his ship or a torpedo that would blow him away. Rather than the destruction of great numbers of enemy ships, the greatest contribution made by these boats was the deterrent factor they became to the Union invaders. Vast quantities of seamen, materials, and ships had to be allocated to guard against their expected attacks. Union offensive plans were often swayed by consideration of their use against the attackers. Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard paid tribute to the torpedo boats when he commented that future Southerners would ask "how it was that with such a great discovery, offering such magnificent results, we never applied it to any useful purpose in this contest for our homes and independence." This is a welcome addition to available information on Confederate naval activity.

A fascinating story of the design and development of the Confederate torpedo boats and the courageous officers who took them into battle.

From the Inside Flap Sentries stomped their feet on the wooden dock in a vain attempt to stay warm. Nearby, gaslights illuminated a mysterious-looking vessel that was made fast to the wharf. In the flickering light the strange blue-gray craft resembled a huge half-submerged 50-foot cigar. A thin cold December mist had settled over the darkened harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. There was no moon, but the twinkling of stars in an otherwise black sky revealed that the night was clear.... About the Author R. Thomas Campbell has been studying and writing about the Confederate experience in the War Between the States for years. He is the author of several Civil War naval titles

including The CSS H.L. Hunley.