



Mr. Lincoln's High-tech War

Thomas B. Allen , Roger MacBride Allen

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Thomas B. Allen's expertise in military history and strategy is combined with Roger MacBride Allen's knowledge of technology to reveal a lesser-known yet fascinating side of the 16th president of the United States. Their authoritative narrative reveals Lincoln as our nation's first hands-on Commander-in-Chief, whose appreciation for the power of technology plays a critical role in the North's Civil War victory over the less developed South.

Readers meet Lincoln as he exchanges vital telegraph messages with his generals in the field; we witness his inspection of new ship models at the Navy Yard; we view the president target-shooting with the designer of a new kind of rifle; and we follow Lincoln, the man of action, as he leads a daring raid to recapture Norfolk, VA.

The book's historic sweep also sets Abraham Lincoln in the context of his military era: we learn about the North's Anaconda Plan, the South's counter strategies, and how the concept of total war replaced the old Napoleonic way of fighting. Readers will come away with a rich sense of a leader who lived through one of the most exciting ages of technological and social change in America. With archival photographs, artwork, and maps, *Mr. Lincoln's High-Tech War* brings alive a time when the railroad brought soldiers and to and from the battlefields, when hot-air balloons were used for surveillance, and when ironclad warships revolutionized naval warfare.

The Allens' detailed study demonstrates why Lincoln's appreciation of the importance of technology, his understanding of the art of war, and his mastery of military strategy were key elements in the winning of the American Civil War.

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Mr. Lincoln's High-tech War Details

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From Reader Review Mr. Lincoln's High-tech War for online ebook

Con says

Mr. Lincoln's high-tech war by Thomas B. Allen and Roger Macbride Allen was a good, easy read which informed me more about the civil war in depth outside of social studies class. This book was published by National Geographic which made me pick up this book because NG usually makes good books. It had an interesting cover which cut straight to the point; they believed Lincoln won the war using advanced technology. This included the telegraphs, railroads, balloons, and iron clad ships. Since this is such a controversial topic, I knew it would be a good read in which it challenges the reader think outside the box about the Civil War. I have often thought about the technology that this book hints at on the cover so I decided to read it.

This book was a good idea, but the beginning was not good. The whole first page explains how Americas was stuck in an age in which new inventions did not happen. The first line is, "In 1809 Abraham Lincoln was born into the last generation of Americans who did not expect technology ever to change." I believe that this book should have started with saying how inventions were starting to change America. This would have provided a base for the rest of the argument. The middle and end were notably better in which the authors provided lots of information covering every question the reader would have. Also the pictures and little information boxes were perfect in creating the book. Most 7th graders should read this book to get a better understanding of Lincoln and how the civil war worked.

Jessica says

"Mr Lincoln's High-Tech War" is a good summary of some of the major technological improvements occurring during the Civil War. Though a valuable book, it is rather like a survey course, a great deal of details, but not a lot of depth. Many of the technological improvements discussed here warrant lengthy tomes on their own (many have been written) in particular weapon inventions (Springfield repeaters, new breechloading rifles), the invention of the Ironclads and the Hunley, the very first submarine, all are covered better and in more depth in other books. Also, though the use of the railroad and the invention of Morse Code are talked about, and an example given (Chattanooga relief) I felt it was underserved. In addition, it might have been worth mentioning more about technology that didn't change (medicine) and the refusal of people (especially generals) to make use of these new technologies.

"Mr. Lincoln's High-Tech War" was a good survey book, one I would proudly include on my Civil War bookcase, but should only be used as a jumping off point for further discussion of the various technologies used and the technological inventions being made during the Civil War.

Honza Prchal says

While the author leaves out some much-needed explanations of WHY running railroads was difficult (and remains so - making the trains run on time was always an impressive achievement a good deal harder than setting up a government website), this is a solid, informative, entertaining book.

I "read" it as an audiobook, narrated by Fred Sullivan, and the version is unabridged and otherwise identical

(save for the absence of any illustrations not on the cover), and can say that the clarity and conciseness, excepting the example of railroads I mentioned earlier, that authors who often write for children comes through in this book, which they wrote for adults and intelligent children who can hold their own with them. The difficulty with this book for someone reasonably familiar with the war is that it is too short, especially in discussing railroads and the death of Mr. Lincoln. Still, it is workmanlike and entertaining at the same time, and that's no small thing.

Kathy says

Enthusiastic about the new technology just beginning to appear in the world, Abraham Lincoln used the telegraph, railroads, surveillance balloons, ironclad ships, high-powered weapons, and more - including the concept of total war - to win America's Civil War in the 1860s.

I would not have thought there could be a fresh, informative look at Abraham Lincoln by this point, but this picture of Lincoln as the technology enthusiast and hands-on war commander is full of fascinating - and new to me - facts. Well-organized and smoothly written, it is extensively illustrated with photos and engravings - printed on a matte paper so the photos look more like the more common drawings. This is effective design. Occasional boxes develop topics - habeas corpus, land torpedos, firing mechanisms, juneteenth, etc. There are also extensive end notes (tiny print) and an index. The author points out that there is lots of primary source material available on line but includes an extensive book bibliography too - a gold mine for researchers. Middle school and up.

Miss Pippi the Librarian says

The Civil War is of great interest to thousands of Americans. It's a war that divided the nation. Author Thomas B. Allen focused on the war, but with a new aspect - the technology of the times. The main theme is technology and how Lincoln loved it and utilized it when possible.

For any Civil War enthusiast or history lover, this is an excellent non-fiction piece. Allen shares information about Lincoln's patent (the only President to have one), the telegraph, the railroad, hot air balloons, the navy, and more. It's a fascinating look into history and how history influenced today's machinery and war tactics. I would recommend this title to students and adults with any interest in history.

Fred Sullivan narrates Allen's book. It's an easy listen on the ears. The text doesn't call for dynamic reading, but Sullivan adds a bit of flair when needed. I would listen to a book narrated by Sullivan again.

Reviewed from an Audio Jukebox copy. Thank you, AudioGo!

Amber Lovett says

Allen, Thomas B. and Roger MacBride Allen. Mr. Lincoln's High Tech War. 2009. 144 pp. \$18.95. National Geographic. 978-1-4263-0380-7. Ages 10-15 A chronological history of the Civil War from the roots of the conflict to its end and the death of Abraham Lincoln. The story focuses on the ways in which technology was used by Lincoln to defeat the South and change the face of modern warfare forever. Some ideas explored are the use of telegrams, railroads, ironclad warships, hot air balloons, and rapid-fire weapons. Black and white

photos and diagrams clarify concepts without distracting. Helpful sidebars explain important concepts or feature timelines of important events, and an index and list of helpful websites are included. The history is very well-researched and offers a balanced perspective on Lincoln's use of technologies which gave rise to the concept of total war. A good addition for students interested in history, war, technology, or biography. Recommended. Ages 10-15.

marin says

market research

Limited booktalking appeal, only subject specific. Rather dry approach which is unfortunate given the topic and sexy title. Some interesting trivia bits (Lincoln the only president to be awarded a patent, female Pinkerton agent that escorted Lincoln to his inaugural, etc.) that are lost in the unremarkable narrative style. Drab black and white illustrations that are sometimes difficult to see (ironic much National Geographic?!). Perfect size with a nicely type-set cover to mimic a newspaper. >100 pages. Sidebars with small text. Illustration credits crammed in the front. Bibliography, online resources, quote sources, and index.

National Geographic

Lisa says

Interesting look at the use of technology during the Civil War. The most fascinating thing to me was the notion that Abe Lincoln's parents' generation did not expect technology to change. The same tools, guns, methods of transportation, etc. had been in use for many generations. Whereas Abe's great-grandfather could easily have used the tools and guns and wagons that Abe grew up with, his father wouldn't have had a clue what to do with the guns, telegraph machines, trains, and other tools developed during Abe's life.

Ross Davis says

Thomas Allen's non-fiction book about how the North used new high-tech weapons and devices to win the Civil War. Although the book was filled with information about many different topics, he fails to bring the ideas together to form one central theme of how the North capitalized on these new inventions. The title includes "How the North used," which foreshadows that he will give specific examples of times the technology was used, but he does not do this well.

In one section of the book, he discusses how Hot Air Balloons were used often in the war, mainly by the North. He talks about some of the physics in why they were so successful and why it made sense that the North used them. At times, he said that they could sneak behind enemy lines, or spy on them, but even so, he does not describe specific times when they were used.

If the title did not include the phrase "How the North Used," then the book would have a much more elegant rhythm, but because it did, what Allen said was to come never did. Because of this, the book was not very successful.

Rating: 2/5

Nathaniel says

I liked it.

Craig Wanderer says

Worth your time

Jill Berry says

Well-written and clear. It helps to have a background in the Civil War to understand it.

Patty says

This is a young adult book but I loved the way they presented the history of the Civil War, not by long lists of battles and generals (although both are mentioned, often). Instead the entire war is covered by talking about the new technologies that were either used or developed during the war. Iron clad ships, telegraphs, side-loading rifles, and railroads are the highlights but there are a variety of other things that came into being during this long conflict.

Since it is a YA book its a pretty quick read and well written to boot.

Anners says

This meticulously-researched and well-argued book holds that the Union won the war because of technologies the South didn't have, like: printed telegraph messages, long-haul railroads, high-powered weapons and rifles that could shoot three rounds a minute, and submarines and surveillance balloons, to name just a few I can remember off the top of my head. Bet you didn't know some of those were used during the Civil War!

Simon Aaronson says

Summer Reading Book Review

Historical Summer Reading Book Review: What Were the Life Lessons?

One of the life lessons in Mr. Lincoln's High-Tech War is that although you believe that everything you do is absolutely perfect, whether it is a weapon or a telegraph, it can still be improved. During the Civil War, the flintlock firing system was improved with the percussion-cap system. A more current example would be writing for english, history, or science. You could write a rough draft and think that you are done with your whole essay, but if you go through it thoroughly, you might find it is unclear or has spelling or grammar errors that you had missed the first time.

Another life lesson that I learned is that you could always be more prepared. Abraham Lincoln could have sent provisions to Fort Sumter before the Confederates had taken siege of the fort. You could be more prepared for class. You could have pens as your writing utensil for that day, but if the teacher asks you to bring a pencil, and you don't have one, you could get in trouble with the teacher.

The last life lesson that I learned is that you must be careful with what you do, whether it is placing your generals at a particular spot or dealing with an acid in science. Abraham Lincoln had put his men in Indian Territory during the Civil War, so they had an advantage on frontal strikes against the Confederate army, but because he did this, he placed Washington, D.C. at risk of being invaded. This was because he placed all his men in Indian Territory, and he had volunteer militias guarding Washington., but not all of the militias were loyal to him. When you're dealing with a dangerous acid in science class, you want gloves, an apron, and safety goggles. If you do not learn from the mistakes you've made in the past, you're going to make the same errors in the future.

Rating:4.5/5 stars
