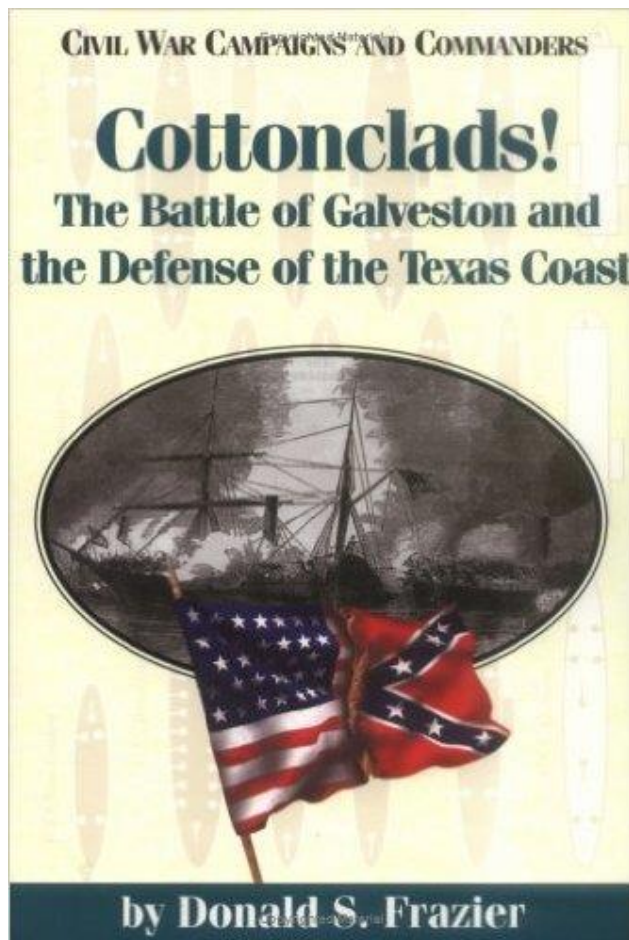


Cottonclads! The Battle of Galveston and the Defense of the Texas Coast

By Donald S. Frazier

Review by Rob Morgan

My friend Mike Crane, well published in this blog, recently sent me a copy of *Cottonclads! The Battle of Galveston and the Defense of the Texas Coast*, published in 1998 by McWhiney Foundation Press in the USA, at \$11.95. A 144-page paperback, very well mapped and competently illustrated, and which deals with a combined operations campaign which has so much to offer the ACW naval wargamer.



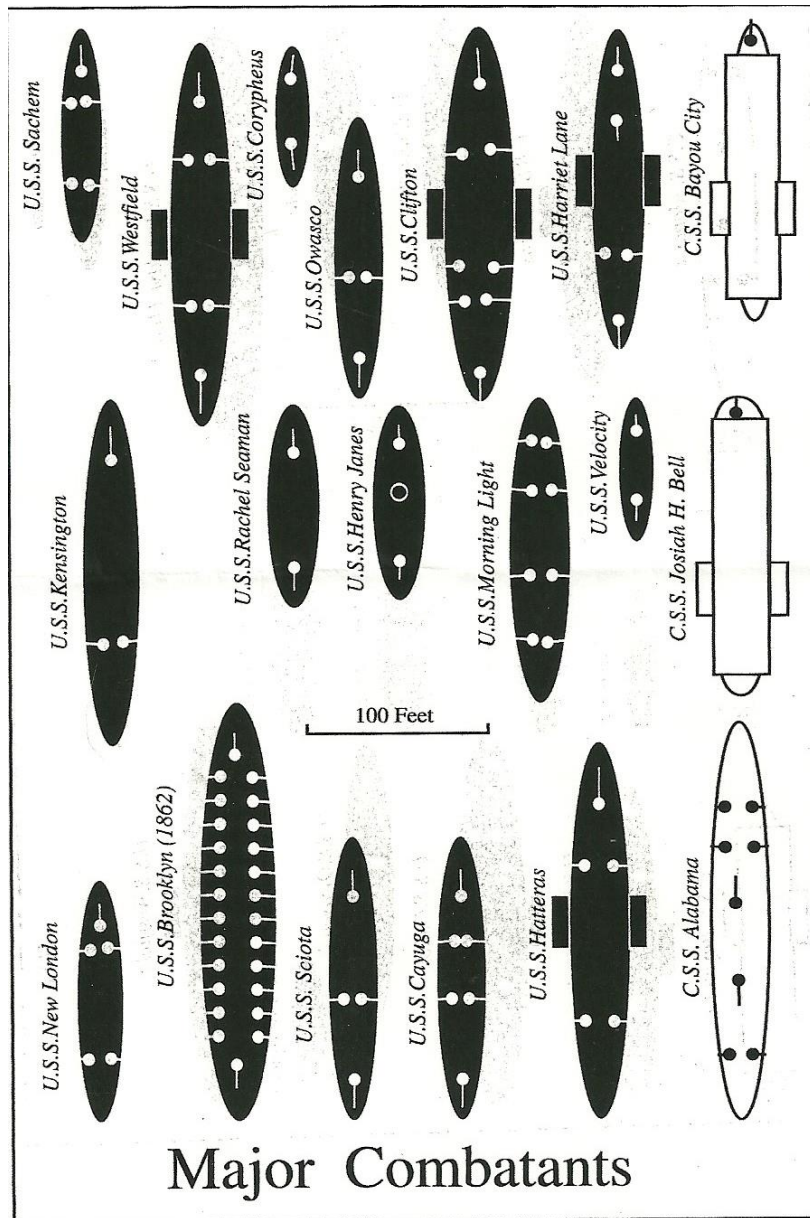
Almost all of the vessels involved are easily assembled using Peter Pig, Thoroughbred and Bay Area Yards models in 1/600th, or the products of the numerous manufacturers in 1/1200th. I honestly prefer 1/600th because the Pig range, for example, has a decent shore range of infantry, cavalry, of heavy and light guns, supplies and buildings, etc. for sharpshooting and ambush purposes, all very useful if you game these ship to shore and ship to ship battles.

In 1862, Admiral Farragut ordered landings against Galveston and several other Texan ports, and Galveston was captured. However, the sailors of the Union fleet suffered setbacks and ultimately defeat before they could be adequately supported by the Army, when McGruder's Confederate force of Cottonclads were bold enough to attack the Yankee warships, and were very ably supported by their artillery and sharpshooters ashore. This counterattack led to heavy losses by the Federals, four warships and three support vessels, and to the re-taking of

Galveston, which remained a crucial Confederate blockade runner port until the war's end.

A very readable and tremendously useful book, it deals with several of the encounters which might make sound table top games. The Battle of Sabine Pass, and the action off Galveston on New Year's Day 1863, for example, all mapped, including the shoal waters and sandbanks. There's a very good diagram provided of a subsidiary encounter between two Union gunboats and a host of Texan shore gunners and infantry at Kuhn's Wharf (now that would make an interesting game, using land and naval forces). The sinking of *USS Hatteras*,

the bold capture of *USS Harriet Lane* and the remarkable capture of three Union supply vessels in a lengthy chase can all make for short and effective games.



As well as illustrating how dangerous a place Texas could be for the Federal ships, as the cover notes say, the book includes a very interesting and most unusual feature -- one made for the naval wargamer. On page 44, there's a plan of each of the major naval vessels involved in these encounters, some 20 in all, and to a decent wargame scale. The gun positions on each ship are shown clearly, and the armament and ship details are provided for each one in Appendix C of the book. By copying the page onto card, the non-ACW naval person can create the battles with little effort, and they can be used elsewhere on the rivers and coasts of the Confederacy, of course. Even beyond that!

A few pages on, there are two side-on views of Confederate Cottonclads which

could also be turned into flats for a table top action with little difficulty.

Really an excellent book, filled with ideas and interest, dealing with a campaign the Confederacy won and won through competent action afloat and ashore.