



1862

Robert Conroy

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The Civil War comes alive in all its passion and fury—only now the Brits are fighting . . . alongside the Confederacy

Outraged when the U.S. Navy seizes three Confederates aboard an English sailing ship, Britain retaliates by entering the fray in support of the Rebels—and suddenly it's a whole new war.

Once again, cotton is king as the North's blockade crumbles before the might of the Royal Navy. While Lincoln confronts the monumental challenge of vanquishing mighty Britannia, the Redcoats revive their 1812 penchant for burning down American cities, and Union troops see Canada as ripe for the picking. From the Mississippi bayou to the Pennsylvania farmlands to the woods of Maine, the great armies of Generals Grant and Lee face off in the nation's deadliest conflict. And to the victor goes history.

1862 Details

Date : Published February 28th 2006 by Presidio Press

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Author : Robert Conroy

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From Reader Review 1862 for online ebook

Kerry Trombley says

A interesting alternate history novel describing what would have happened should England have declared war on the United States during the Civil War. The characters were well formed and the military history starts in line with what could have happened. However, this version of history simply assumed that after England declared war, the Union stopped making mistakes and became the military power it would be in 1865. It is hard to believe that the war department would have recognized both Grant and Sherman and promoted them to ranking positions. Militarily, the story seems plausible, but only under the assumption that the Union leadership made all the right choices, and appointed all the right generals, at the right time....which history tells us that this is very unlikely.

However, the story is a good read, and an interesting perspective on how the Union would have overcome seemingly insurmountable odds to triumph. I think the outcome would likely have never been in doubt, but how it got there is a little historically suspect...it likely would have been a much longer struggle.

(SPOILER) Furthermore, having Lee get shot just at the high tide of the invasion seems like a bit of a cop out...a lazy way to wrap up and end the story.

Dave says

I'm really enjoying Robert Conroy's alternate history stories. The premise here is that, unlike what actually occurred, the British choose to intervene on the side of the Confederacy in America's Civil War for a number of plausible reasons. The changes that ensue are interesting to see. I'm also even more curious to read a recent non-fiction book called "The Cause of All Nations," about other nations' reactions to our Civil War. I'll have to move it up on my TBR list. Perhaps it will make me doubt the plausibility of the premise of 1862, but even if it does, Conroy still tells a good story.

The Cause of All Nations An International History of the American Civil War by Don H. Doyle by Don H. Doyle (no photo)

Dave says

Robert Conroy's "1862" tells of an alternate history Civil War in which Britain enters the war on the Confederacy's side after the "Trent" incident of 1862. In many ways this book reminds me of Harry Turtledove's works; unfortunately, "1862" isn't nearly as good. The overall story is decent, and involves a few good plot twists and some memorable naval battle scenes. However, the story seems forced at times, and Conroy's writing style occasionally falls into melodrama. More importantly, the book's historical base has some flaws -- for instance, using words and phrases that were not in popular usage during the Civil War era (such as "redneck") and having historical figures (such as Grant and Lee) being held in high regard well before their actual rise in prominence. Overall, "1862" is a fair effort, but ultimately leaves the reader

unsatisfied.

Randy McCollum says

I enjoy anything by Conroy, but was a little disappointed in the ending. Like others have already stated, the probability of the Union defeating the Confederacy reinforced by British regulars is somewhat unlikely. Overall this is still a good read.

Paul Lunger says

Robert Conroy's "1862" offers an alternate version of American Civil War in a what if scenario if Great Britain rejects the American apology for the Trent incident & enters the war on the side of the Confederacy as a partner & not a full ally. In this version of events, the US decides to invade Canada while the British start firebombing cities again like they did in the War of 1812. We also have a condition of the Confederates set up by the British that if they help out slavery must end. The story itself is rather interesting twist on things as the south somewhat unsuccessfully invades the north & the north succeeds in conquering part of Canada. There is also an assassination attempt made on Lincoln at Ft Stephens that is tied into John Wilkes Booth. We also have an unnecessary slave revolt that seems to be there for not a lot of reasons either.

There are 2 issues I have with Conroy's story. The first is it seems a bit too convenient in how the events particularly those of the Americans in how easily they mobilize & conquer Canada. The other issue is after the battle of Washington, D.C. & the arrival of "secret orders" that are discovered that cause the British to cease hostilities with the U.S. & tell the Confederacy pretty much to either surrender or be destroyed. Also the fact that what is now Canada ends up essentially in American hands after the war while being plausible but highly unlikely.

Overall though this is a decent read for anyone looking at an alternate version of history even if it is a bit too convenient at times since Conroy does keep true to the characters & players within the war & the spirit of the Americans in 1862. I only wonder if this would've worked better had the story focused on more than one year if things would've ended differently.

Mary JL says

This book is based on a simple idea: What if Great Britain had entered the US Civil War on the Confederate side?

Of course, you could write dozens of novels on that premise and each could be different. What actually would have happened could be debated by historians for years. I lack enough historical knowledge of the real war to comment on whether thus and such tactical maneuver would have worked. So, I just enjoyed it.

Conroy does makes one good point. Many assume adding Britain's might would result in a slam-dunk win for the South. But it is not a given. Yes, Britain has lots more manpower--but also has to keep troops in the Crimea; the Far East and India. And Ireland---the British always had troops there. a second hindrance---without modern communications, fighting a war on the other side of the oceans creates many problems.

Admittedly, I find Conroy a bit optimistic in his 'timetable' of what would have happened.

Nevertheless it is a fun, sideways in time alternate history. It is a good solid three star tale, a few inconsistencies and a few minor quibbles for me--but it kept me turning pages. Recommended for both SF alternate history fans and fans of historical fiction.

Joe Stamber says

I've read several of Robert Conroy's alternate history novels previously and thoroughly enjoyed them. I believe this was one of his earlier efforts and it's also my least favourite of those I've read to date. The idea of the British joining in on the side of the Confederacy in the American Civil War is a fascinating one and I was interested to see where Conroy took it. Unfortunately Conroy made everyone on the Confederate/British side incredibly stupid without a good idea between them and everything that could go wrong for them did. On the other hand, the Union side were full of bright ideas and couldn't put a foot wrong. It also didn't help that the characters had a habit of explaining themselves when it was completely unnecessary. I'm sure I'll enjoy other Conroy novels in the future but this one was a bit of a drag for me.

Ed Rollins says

The book is an ok; it got me my alternate history fix when I needed it. That said, and to be blunt, the author's no Harry Turtledove. Good Alternate History should spring from a simple "what-if"? In this case, what if the British had entered the Civil War on the side of the South? From that point on, history should be altered only by the ripples of triggering element (the theoretical what-if). While the story in 1862 is feasible, I never felt like the suspension of disbelief was in seriously jeopardy, he does make some broad reaching departures from the historical timeline that would not--should not- be affected by his triggering element. The book suffers from frequent bouts of lethargy which have, sadly, been filled in with more gratuitous sex than even I can stomach. I realize that I could be kicked out of the locker room for this; but I found the lesbian relationship between the tacked on love interest and the stereotypical French courtesan extraneous. The book ended with a whimper, collapsing under the absence of either plot or the development of the alleged alternate history. It felt as if the last few chapters were written on the train ride to the editor's office.

John Love IV says

What would have happened if the British had sided with the South after the Trent incident? This is one possible thought and one that's well written.

A very enjoyable alternative history!

Tony Uzzell says

This book seems to have been written to prove the point that, even had the Confederacy had British military support, the Union still would have won the Civil War (or, as I prefer to call it, "The Late Unpleasantness").

That's a point worth discussing and it's one that could be argued intelligently by historians , both amateur and professional, until the proverbial cows come home.

Where I run into trouble comes with the idea that adding the British in a supporting role to the Confederate cause allows the Union to not only remain victorious, but allows them to win the war in 1862 rather than 1865. This is a preposterous contention and detracted greatly from the enjoyment I might have gotten from the book. A British inclusion in the war might have done many things, but shortening it in favor of the Union is an asinine conclusion. It drives home the point to me that bad history and alternate history just don't mix.

Henry says

The premise was ok, but Conrad really underestimates Robert E Lee, and Stonewall Jackson. Far as he was concerned the only real reason the CSA fought for so long was because the British Empire did not join the war.

David R. says

Perhaps the British contemplated war on the side of the CSA in the wake of the Trent affair, but the outcome of this novel is entirely implausible to me. I doubt very much that the Union could have overcome the hugely longer odds of a two front war.

Charles van Buren says

Not a believable alternate history, September 3, 2016

This review is from: 1862: A Novel (Kindle Edition)

The North had difficulty defeating the Confederacy. The idea that the Yankees could have prevailed against both the Confederacy and the British Empire is not believable.

Matthew Clark says

Alternate timelines are supposed to be fun and interesting, yet this one strayed so far from plausibility that I could never really enjoy it.

It took the Union until 1865 to beat the Confederacy. Are we really supposed to believe that with Britain entering the war on the side of the Confederacy, the Union would suddenly be able to win in 1862? There is absolutely no logic in that.

The sex scenes are completely irrelevant. The books supposed to be about the war, not an outlet for the author to get his jollies about lesbianism.

There is better stuff to read out there. Spend your time elsewhere.

AJ Conroy says

I believe I have discovered the male version of the bodice ripper-- alternative history. The amount of sex was a bit surprising, but I had been warned that there was a lesbian tryst (although sadly not on a battlefield as I had been told). I mentioned my theory to Dan who seemed a bit offended by the comparison. That makes me think I'm on the right track. It's enjoyable, escapism. Maybe it would be more palatable if I called it chic lit? Either way, I'm not buying the "but you learn history" argument for why this genre is more intellectually redeemable. It is fantasy. I'd recommend this book (and the others in the series) for those who like Tom Clancy because it's laden with technical details like Clancy's first books.
