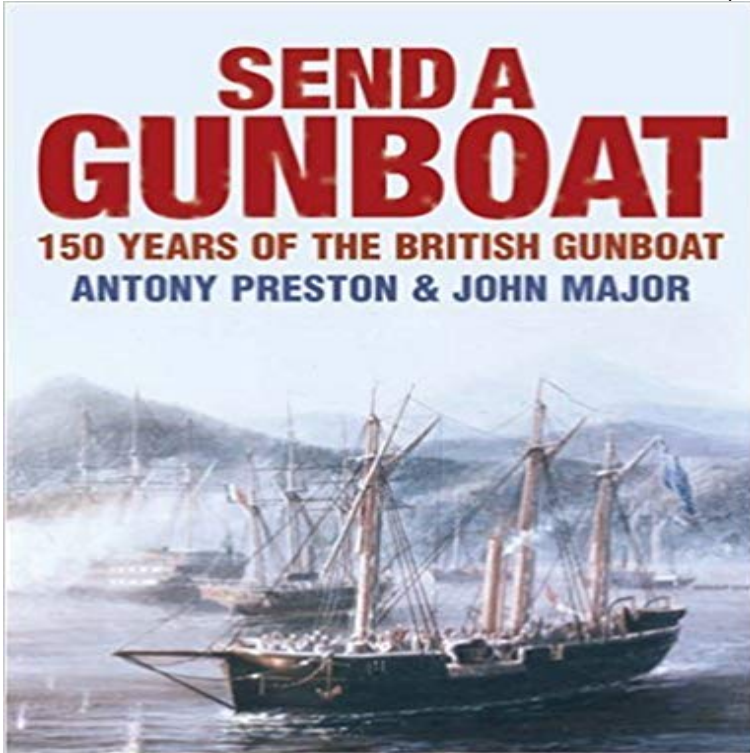


Send a Gunboat!: The Victorian Navy and Supremacy at Sea 1854-1904



Published in its original form 35 years ago, *Send a Gunboat* remains the standard reference on the remarkable story of the Victorian Royal Navys fleet of small warships, which enforced the Pax Britannica around the world for half a century. Frequently acting without orders, and largely beyond the reach of Admiralty interference, their young commanding officers intervened to stamp out the slave trade and to stop local rulers from interfering with legitimate trade. The period has been greatly misunderstood, and the phrase gunboat diplomacy is used to suggest a crude use of naval strength to bully and coerce weaker nations. In fact the Pax Britannica was a much more subtle and complex concept, calling for the use of limited force to create a favourable climate for international trade. Although the term gunboat was loosely applied to oared craft in the late 18th Century and a handful of early steam vessels, the first proper gunboats were built to fight the Russians in the Baltic in 1854-55. They proved so useful that a flotilla was sent out to Hong Kong in 1857 for the early skirmishes which led to the Second China War. When peace was restored in 1860 they and a series of replacements remained on station, a state of affairs which did not end until 1941. Conway offers a fully revised edition of this classic, incorporating the results of new research, the lessons applicable to modern limited naval warfare, and above all the wealth of photographs in the Conway Picture Library. The text is revised and, where necessary, expanded; the original structure is retained, with a complete listing of the gunboats, together with details of armament and fates.

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