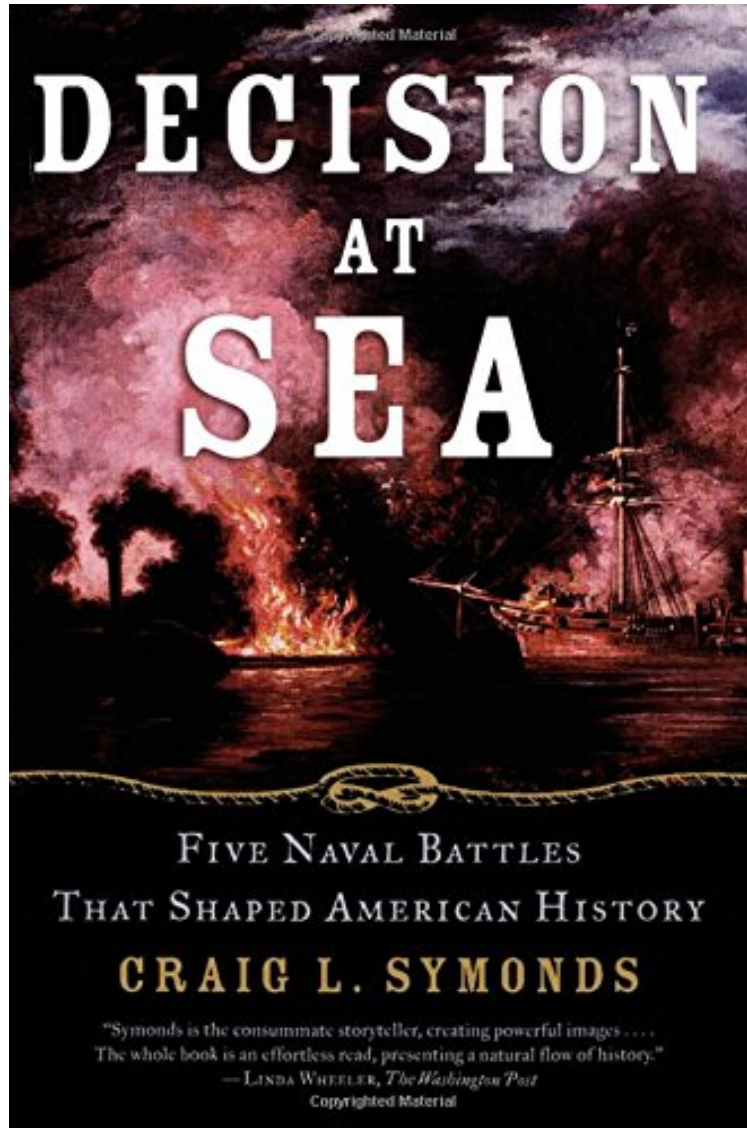


[Library ebook] Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles that Shaped American History

Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles that Shaped American History

Craig L. Symonds

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Craig L. Symonds : Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles that Shaped American History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles that Shaped American History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great detail, would have liked less analysisBy William R. BradfordThe good: A very detailed analysis of four battles (the last is more a series)that had a profound effect on American history. Minutely researched descriptions of the battles, their place in history, and how they affected American history. Great fir people who love naval history.The not so good: Anytime you try to extrapolate that one

one naval engagement changed overall history (not just naval history) you are walking into the realm of conjecture. The author acknowledges this in the acknowledgements. I can definitely buy Midway being the turning point of the Pacific theater in World War II, and Hampton Roads certainly changed naval warfare forever, but I felt the conclusions were sometimes a bit of a reach. This was especially evident in the final chapter and epilogue.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Quite a Good StudyBy Michael MederThe analysis (or is it analyses?) contained in this book are thorough, well researched, and illuminating. The history lesson is more instructive than I remember learning in my younger days. And, the opportunity to recount the last 20 years or so (1990-2010), with dispassionate study is refreshing, when compared to the strongly partisan bellowing from the Liberal / Progressive / Socialist / Communist elements found in today's discourse.I happily recommend this tome to my brethren in the US Naval Institute, and to historians, even policy wonks for their consideration.1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Not the right five battles!By Doctor BobMaybe I am biased because I read several naval histories one after the other, and this is by far the least enjoyable, but I found this book flawed. The author notes that he took over the project from a dying friend, and changed some of the battles. I think that was an error.The first battle is Lake Erie, clearly important, clearly a defining moment for the US. However, while stressing the fact that the boats we used were actually built right there on the lake, the process of building them was given short shrift.The second is Hampton Roads, also critical, the Manilla Bay (which wasn't really much of a fight) then Midway (replacing Guadalcanal), then Persian Gulf (also not really a battle).The message of World War II, which comes through clearly from my reading this, Six Frigates, Last of the Tin Can Sailors, and Neptune's Inferno back to back is not that battleships became obsolete and the age of the carriers took over, it's that who ever has the best technology wins. Battleships and carriers only survived because destroyers were willing to get blown to bits protecting them. Cheap little torpedoes and bombs blew away the "queens" of the fleets. US destroyers with radar guided guns scared the bejeebes out of battleships and cruisers with human guided systems. Willis Lee's battleships his the Japanese with every salvo, the Japanese often fire dozens of salvos that hit nothing. But -- four destroyers died protecting Lee, or his battleships would have been sunk by subs and everyone would have lost.Not as well written (and there are a surprising number of editing issues for a professional Kindle book) as the other histories I read, and it's message came across to me as off kilter -- the emphasis of the text didn't fit the signal being sent.

From thunderous broadsides traded between wooden sailing ships on Lake Erie, to the carrier battles of World War II, to the devastating high-tech action in the Persian Gulf, here is a gripping history of five key battles that defined the evolution of naval warfare--and the course of the American nation. Acclaimed military historian Craig Symonds offers spellbinding narratives of crucial engagements, showing how each battle reveals the transformation of technology and weaponry from one war to the next; how these in turn transformed naval combat; and how each event marked a milestone in American history. - Oliver Hazard Perry's heroic victory at Lake Erie, one of the last great battles of the Age of Sail, which secured the Northwestern frontier for the United States- The brutal Civil War duel between the ironclads Monitor and Virginia, which sounded the death knell for wooden-hulled warships and doomed the Confederacy's hope of besting the Union navy- Commodore Dewey's stunning triumph at Manila Bay in 1898, where the U.S. displayed its "new navy" of steel-hulled ships firing explosive shells and wrested an empire from a fading European power - The hairsbreadth American victory at Midway, where aircraft carriers launched planes against enemies 200 miles away--and where the tide of World War II turned in the space of a few furious minutes - Operation Praying Mantis in the Persian Gulf, where computers, ship-fired missiles, and "smart bombs" not only changed the nature of warfare at sea, but also marked a new era, and a new responsibility, for the United States. Symonds records these encounters in detail so vivid that readers can hear the wind in the rigging and feel the pounding of the guns. Yet he places every battle in a wide perspective, revealing their significance to America's development as it grew from a new Republic on the edge of a threatening frontier to a global superpower.Decision at Sea is a powerful and illuminating look at pivotal moments in the history of the Navy and of the United States. It is also a compelling study of the unchanging demands of leadership at sea, where commanders must make rapid decisions in the heat of battle with lives--and the fate of nations--hanging in the balance.

From BooklistA distinguished specialist in naval history and the Civil War studies five decisive moments in American naval history. In the Battle of Lake Erie, Oliver Hazard Perry's modest fleet prevented a British invasion of the Northwest. The Civil War duel between the Monitor and the virginia touched off a building race in ironclads, something that the Confederacy couldn't possibly win. At the Battle of Manila Bay, Commodore George Dewey's victory proved the potential of the new steel-shell-firing navy and opened the way to American overseas expansion. In World War II, the Battle of Midway, if it didn't necessarily prevent a Japanese victory, certainly sped an American one and proved the worth of the carrier-based aviation that has been America's major maritime striking arm ever since. Finally, Operation Praying Mantis in the Persian Gulf proved that when one goes closer inshore, attackers lacking command of the air can still use missiles to noteworthy effect. Roland GreenCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved "Symonds is the consummate storyteller, creating powerful images.... The whole book

is an effortless read, presenting a natural flow of history beginning with the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813 and ending with Operation Praying Mantis in 1988."--Linda Wheeler, Washington Post"A riveting account of the morphing of the United States Navy from its humble beginnings in the forests and lakes of the North American wilderness to an awesome and overwhelming strike force that cements the United States' position as the world's remaining superpower and de facto policeman."--Proceedings (The United States Naval Institute)"Without question, *Decision at Sea* is a riveting, well-researched account of the U.S. Navy in action. Historian Craig Symonds should be saluted for writing an important and living narrative that shows how sea battles shaped the course of American history." --Douglas Brinkley, author of *Tour of Duty* and *The Unfinished Presidency*"Craig Symonds delivers American naval history in the tradition of Sir Edward Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*. Combat at sea, from the Great Lakes to the Persian Gulf, jumps from the page in a vibrant, arresting narrative. Complementing each battle piece is an informed argument about the engagement's impact on the course of history."--Alex Roland, Duke University"Craig Symonds, one of America's leading naval historians, has written a fascinating battle history that also provides thoughtful insights into the American character and the character of America at pivotal moments in the last 225 years. His prose is very accessible and provocative, particularly as he portrays what the future may hold for the U.S. Navy at the apogee of its power."--William S. Dudley, Former Director, U.S. Naval Historical Center"*Decision at Sea* combines the wisdom of Alfred Thayer Mahan with the eminent readability we have come to expect from Craig Symonds. This book is destined to be a classic of both naval literature and national strategy."--Thomas Cutler, U.S. Naval Institute, author of *A Sailor's History of the U.S. Navy* and *The Battle of Leyte Gulf*"Craig Symonds' *Decision at Sea* deftly integrates five vigorous battle narratives with a comparative analysis that highlights the changing character and recurring critical role the U.S. Navy has played in American history."--John B. Hattendorf, Naval War College

About the Author
Craig L. Symonds is a leading Civil War and naval historian who was Professor of History at the United States Naval Academy for three decades. He also taught at the U.S. Naval War College and the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, England. His ten books include award-winning biographies of Joseph Johnston, Patrick Cleburne, and Franklin Buchanan, and the reference titles *The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy* and *A Battlefield Atlas of the Civil War*.