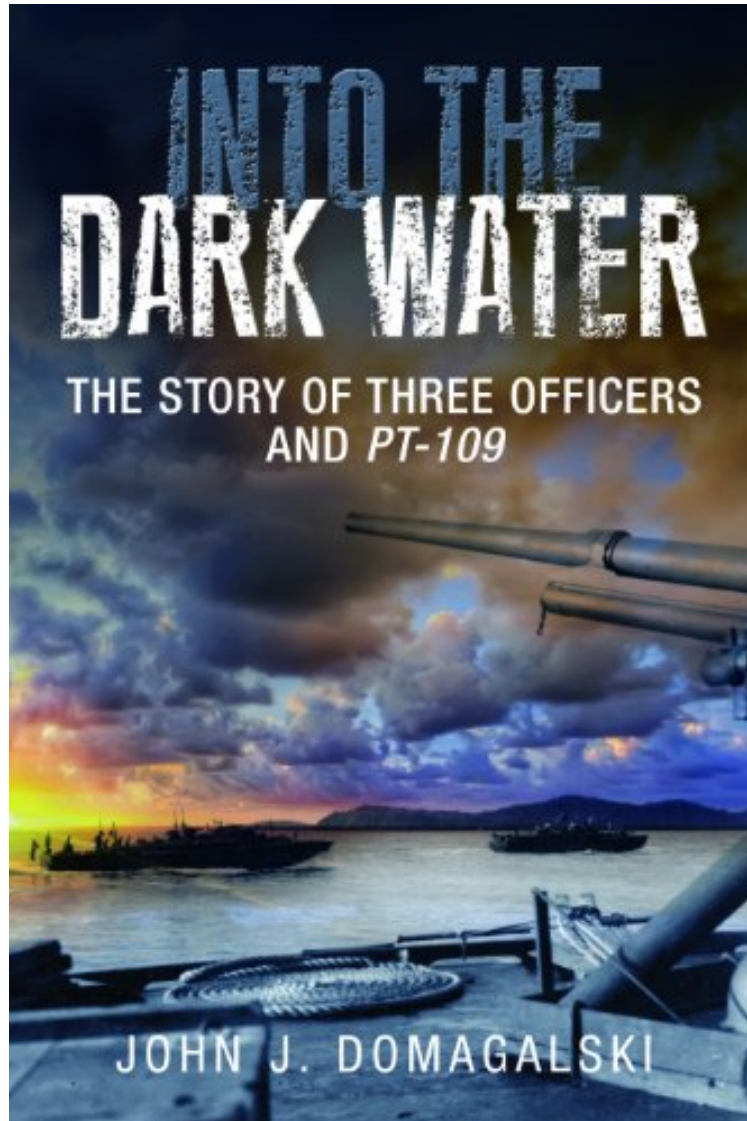


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Into the Dark Water: The Story of Three Officers and PT-109

John J. Domagalski

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John J. Domagalski : Into the Dark Water: The Story of Three Officers and PT-109 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Into the Dark Water: The Story of Three Officers and PT-109:

Main Selection of the Military Book Club Made famous by her final commanding officer, John F. Kennedy, PT-109 is

one of the most celebrated warships in American history. However, a full chronicle of PT-109's wartime story has heretofore been lacking. Behind the familiar account of the future president and the boat's violent demise is the little-known record under two previous officers during the swirling battles around Guadalcanal. In these mainly nocturnal fights, when the Japanese navy was at its apex, America's small, fast-boat flotillas would sally out to probe enemy strength, vying with enemy destroyers, who were similarly roaming the waters and able to blast a PT-boat out of the water if main armament could be brought to bear. It was constant hit-and-run and dodging between searchlights across Iron Bottom Sound, as the PT-boats darted in among the enemy fleet, like a "barroom brawl with the lights turned out." Bryant Larson and Rollin Westholm preceded Kennedy as commanders of PT-109, and their fights with the brave ship and its crew hold second to none in the chronicles of US Navy daring. As the battles moved on across the Pacific the PT-boat flotillas gained confidence, even as the Japanese, too, learned lessons in how to destroy them. Under its third and final commander, Kennedy, PT-109 came a cropper as a Japanese destroyer suddenly emerged from a dark mist and rammed it in half. Two crewmen were killed immediately but Kennedy, formerly on the swim team at Harvard, was able to shepherd his wounded and others to refuge. His unsurpassed gallantry can not resist retelling, yet the courage of the book's previous commanders have not till now seen the light of day. This book provides the complete record of PT-109 in the Pacific, as well as a valuable glimpse of how the American Navy's daring and initiative found its full playing field in World War II.