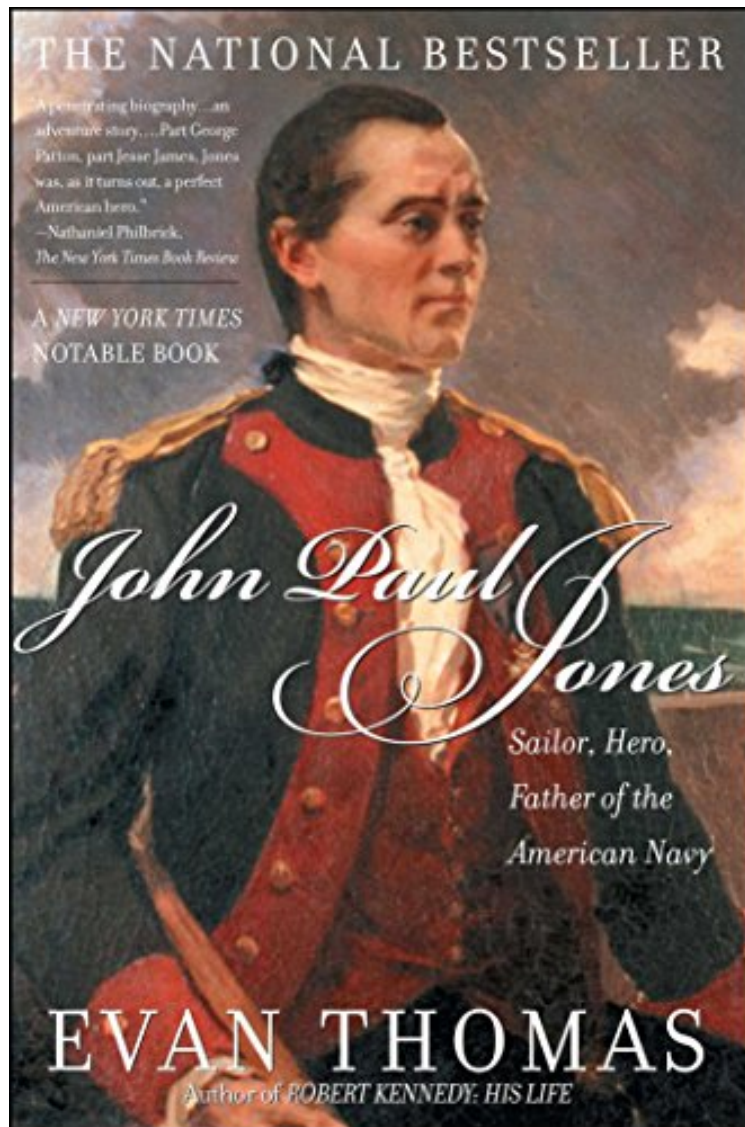


(Free download) John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy

John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy

Evan Thomas

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#559201 in Books Evan Thomas 2004-05-10 2004-05-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 1.20 x 6.121, 1.03 #File Name: 0743258045400 pages John Paul Jones Sailor Hero Father of the American Navy | File size: 73.Mb

Evan Thomas : John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. a self destructive naval hero By Jason G Heroic, visionary, social climber, patriot, depressive, difficult to get along with others, a victor and self destructive are words that can be used to describe the life of John Paul Jones in Evan Thomas now decade old biography. This is a solid, relatively short work that is accessible to the general reader who has interest in naval warfare, the American founding and the late 18th

century. Thomas, besides a career as a journalist and writer, is a high amateur sailer, and is able to articulate nautical terminology to laymen, while still technical enough to ensure the accuracy of his presentation of seamanship. This book covers the full breadth of Jones' life, from his birth in the southwest of Scotland, being the son of a senior gardener on an aristocratic estate, to his move to Virginia, his adventures as a merchant seaman, his aligning himself with the Continental cause in the War for Independence, and detail about his sailing campaigns against the British mainland during the war. Afterwards, Thomas details Jones' boredom with peacetime life, and his alienation of everyone he came into contact with in his last years, ending up in his sad, lonely demise in Paris. The most interesting writing here, as you might expect, deals with the leadership of Jones as a US Navy raider along the British coast in 1779. While having little tactical implications, Jones' raids on the coast and on ships, had useful strategic ends, as it encouraged the British populace, in the aftermath of the Saratoga defeat in New York, to reconsider a long fight against a faraway foe, who was tenacious enough to send modern raiders against the British Isles. The examination of why Jones chose to align himself with the Continental cause is looked at in depth in this book, because it is a bit mystifying on paper, but Thomas does go to some length, in his examination of Jones' character, to show that his streak of independence, vainglory, and emotional passion matched with what he thought the American patriot cause should be. Many of the political leaders in America loved his naval leadership at sea, but grew very tired of him, when they actually had to deal with his many proposals, demands and even accusations. This makes even more sense, when in later years, the Russian government grew equally tired of Jones' odd and glory hound like behavior, leading to some conclusions based on several strong pieces of data about the threads that at times led Jones to both spectacular success and spectacular personal failure. As an introductory work to this early leader of the US Navy, the reader should appreciate why he became the symbol of that service, as an indomitable, scrappy, ever fighting leader. The reader should also see why Jones' personal demons led to its sad demise, as those threads were present all his life.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well written, interesting
By mariemarieI was lucky enough to spend a day on the USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53), and have been looking for a well written book about him. As is the case with so many bold military thinkers, he sure was given little respect. But his tactics and victories proved him correct. He would be proud to have the ship I sailed on named after him. Motto: In harms way.
15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Solid Story About A Spectacular Man
By Bill SlocumWhat a difference half a decade can make! In 1774 John Paul was a destitute ex-slave-ship captain on the lam, forsaking his native Scotland for the unknown British colonies of North America. In 1779, that same man, now known as John Paul Jones, was the most feared pirate of the British Isles, the victor of an incredible sea battle which made his name across the Continent, and the first great figure of what would become the American Navy. Evan Thomas's "John Paul Jones" begins aboard of Bonhomme Richard, a crank Indiaman under Jones' fractious command, just as it is about to engage the British man-of-war Serapis off England's Flamborough Head. Cannons are primed, sand is spread over the decks to keep them from becoming slick with blood, and the doctor in the cockpit lays out buckets and saws for the surgery ahead. The Bonhomme Richard would not survive the battle, but Jones would emerge victorious anyway, plucking victory from the jaws of defeat by virtue of his grit and visionary fortitude. Thomas makes a great story out of Jones' life. A senior writer with Newsweek, he is nothing if not readable, with attention for detail and a zest for the telling touch. After allowing a pair of lieutenants to hit up an earl for his silver, Jones goes out of his way to make amends, writing florid and flirtatious letters to the earl's wife and then, finally, returning the silver. "The tea leaves were still inside the teapot," Thomas writes. He offers some interesting insight into what made Jones tick. It's very engaging, and fits together, but as a shrink, Thomas is a good journalist. A lot of times he talks up some awful situation Jones faced, being passed over or calumniated by his Revolutionary brethren, and ascribes the result to Jones' overweening pride. Jones seems to have been a proud man, though not excessively so given his accomplishments or the age he lived in. He did tarry in Paris a bit long between battles, but he was also given some pretty lacking subordinates and superiors. Thomas calls him "the father of the American Navy." It was interesting to read others here saying that John Barry deserves that title. I find myself agreeing with Thomas. Barry was an accomplished commander, and America was lucky to have him, but Jones captured the imagination in a way that would resonate through the centuries. He was quoted, erroneously but with ringing grandeur, by U.S. naval leaders scraping themselves off the sea floor after Pearl Harbor. He remains a figure of pride today. He may never have said "I have not yet begun to fight," but he sure walked the walk. I would have liked Thomas to have laid off the dime-store Freud and focused a chapter on just how much of an outlier he was in the early American naval tradition. Thomas does mention Barry in a footnote, and speaks passingly of other decent captains such as Gustavus Conyngham, a privateer who took the fight to English shores before Jones, but most of his analysis of the Revolutionary Navy is so disparaging as to beg wonder at how the Americans won, Jones or no. It's entertaining reading of losers like John Manley and Dudley Saltonstall, and no doubt accurate, but just how much of a sorry lot was the first U.S. Navy? We are told that when Jones engaged the Serapis, "no captain of an American navy ship had ever defeated and captured a British man-of-war of any real size or strength." But how unusual were Jones' successes? My sense is that when you include his capture of General Burgoyne's winter uniforms in 1776, and his harassment of British trade ships off the coasts of Nova Scotia and the home islands, Jones simply towers over his contemporaries. Just how much so would have made for good reading. Instead, we get a lengthy examination of his poor record as a

lothario, cadging young women, some disturbingly young, and writing verse of obvious below-the-beltline focus. He places his trust in charlatans and spies, and Thomas has at him for it, but the feeling that he may have been more of a victim of his own patriotism and honest zeal for liberty is not adequately addressed. One interesting comparison Thomas makes all-too-briefly is with another American military commander, Benedict Arnold. It can be argued that Jones did at sea what Arnold did on land, giving legitimacy to the Revolutionary struggle via a blazing triumph against all odds. Both were traduced by scheming cohorts, and underappreciated by superiors. "But unlike Arnold, Jones remained steadfast to the American cause," Thomas notes. That seems a point worth remembering. Even opting out of the U.S. Navy itself and becoming an American privateer, as many did, would have allowed Jones to make more money without committing treason. But he didn't. That's more worth study than his dalliances with the ladies of Holland or France. Thomas writes about Jones with appropriate zest and awe, and his book is a true joy, but it's a bit of a missed opportunity too, in not getting past the trendy cynicism of our time and figuring out what makes for a genuine patriot. It's a good biography in the warts-and-all tradition of our day, just not definitive.

The New York Times bestseller from master biographer Evan Thomas brings to life the tumultuous story of the father of the American Navy. John Paul Jones, at sea and in the heat of the battle, was the great American hero of the Age of Sail. He was to history what Patrick O'Brian's Jack Aubrey and C.S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower are to fiction. Ruthless, indomitable, clever; he vowed to sail, as he put it, "in harm's way." Evan Thomas's minute-by-minute recreation of the bloodbath between Jones's Bonhomme Richard and the British man-of-war Serapis off the coast of England on an autumn night in 1779 is as gripping a sea battle as can be found in any novel. Drawing on Jones's correspondence with some of the most significant figures of the American Revolution—John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson—Thomas's biography teaches us that it took fighters as well as thinkers, men driven by dreams of personal glory as well as high-minded principle, to break free of the past and start a new world. Jones's spirit was classically American.

.com Evan Thomas's John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy grounds itself on the facts of Jones's life and accomplishments to bolster his place among the pantheon of Revolutionary heroes while also working to deflate the myths that have circulated about his name. Jones, we learn, was confronted throughout his life with controversy and was crippled by ambition. But Thomas lauds Jones for early innovations as an American self-made man who rose from Scottish servitude. Jones, despite his too brisk manner, was a true success, if not genius, as a naval captain. Early in the Revolutionary War, he captured a shipload of winter uniforms destined for General Burgoyne's army in Canada, which instead warmed General Washington's troops as they swept across the Delaware to defeat British at Princeton and Trenton. Later, Jones helped formulate the Navy's plan of psychological warfare on British citizens. And Jones's strategy to cut off the British fleet via the French Navy was arguably the most decisive strategic decision of the War. In the end, Thomas makes a good case for a renewed appreciation for Jones's role in the broader revolution, citing his many connections to the Founding Fathers and his contributions to the broader war effort. While it may be that the John Paul Jones who proclaimed "I have not yet begun to fight" never existed, the real man behind the textbook legend is every bit as compelling a figure in Thomas's hands. This temperate biography situates Jones in what will likely prove durable fashion among portraits of Adams, Franklin, Washington, and Jefferson. --Patrick O'Kelley
From Publishers Weekly
This superlative biography from Newsweek assistant managing editor Thomas (Robert Kennedy, *His Life*) can hold its own on the shelf with Samuel Eliot Morison's Pulitzer Prize-winning Jones bio, *A Sailor's Story*. It does not add much to our knowledge of the events of its subject's life (from his birth in lowland Scotland in 1747 to his lonely death in revolutionary Paris in 1792), but it adds interpretations and dimensions to practically every event that has been recorded elsewhere. Jones's reception in the rebellious colonies, for example, where he arrived as a fugitive from justice, was much helped by his Masonic affiliations. His (frequently successful) pursuit of the ladies raised eyebrows, and his conduct during the famous ship to ship engagement between Bonhomme Richard and Serapis was more stubborn than sound. The British Captain Pearson was deservedly knighted for saving his valuable convoy from Jones's attack, and Captain Landais of the frigate Alliance may have mistaken his target in poor visibility when he fired some damaging broadsides into Jones's ship, rather than being treacherous or mad as tradition would have it. Jones was clearly prickly, socially ambitious, a difficult subordinate (he alienated every American diplomat in France except Benjamin Franklin) and a martinet as a superior. Jones was also a superb practical seaman (the survival of the frigate Ariel in a hurricane is only the most gripping example), a charismatic combat leader and a man with a vision of the American naval future. Both Jones and his latest biographer can justly be praised as masters of their respective crafts.
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From The New Yorker
The father of the American Navy proves to be an elusive character—both at sea, where he consistently outmaneuvered British men-of-war, and in scholarship, where the legend of his life has overwhelmed the facts. The Jones revered today is, as Thomas explains, largely the creation of Theodore Roosevelt, who wanted a role model for the Navy's officer corps. In this reappraisal, Thomas presents the Scottish-born captain as a first-class entrepreneur of war but doesn't obscure the haphazard way in which Jones's naval victories unfolded, the constant wheedling for

position that alienated his patrons, or his sexual escapades. The complex portrait is rendered with nautical precision—the author knows his topsail from his topgallant—and a lively eye for such details as the Enlightenment virtues espoused by Free-masonry or the proper way to kiss a French lady in the eighteenth century (on the neck, so as not to disturb her makeup). Copyright © 2005 The New Yorker