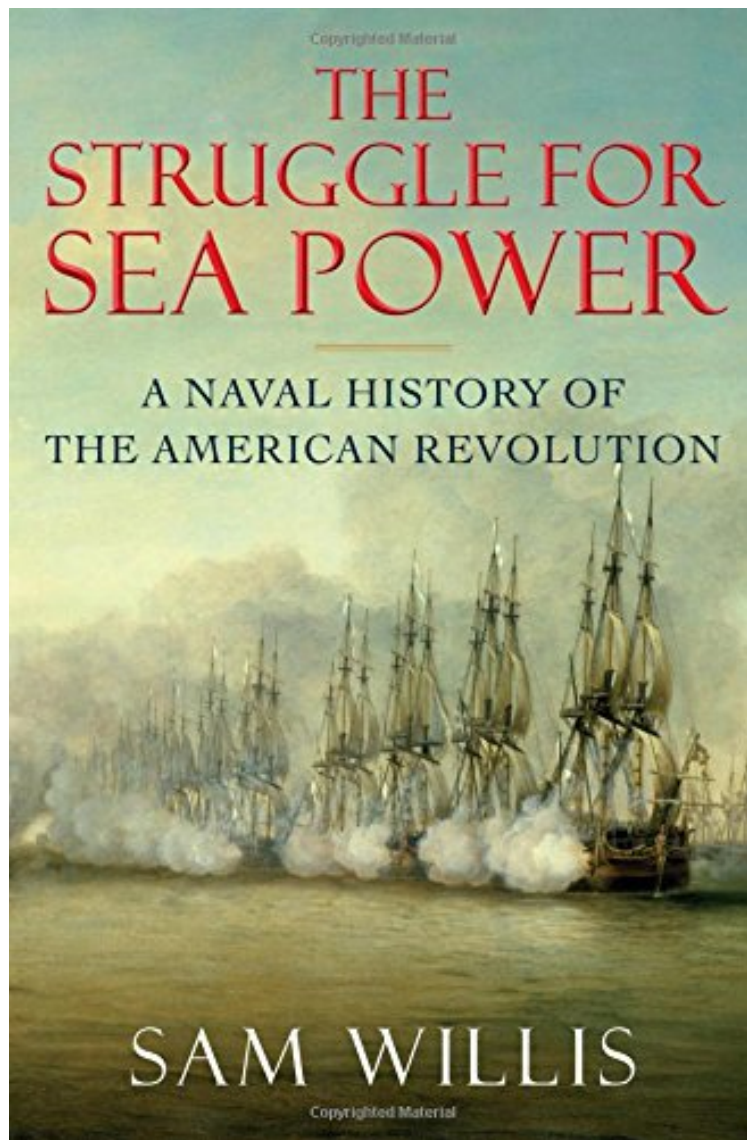


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The Struggle for Sea Power: A Naval History of the American Revolution

Sam Willis

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James M. This excellent history of the important influence of sea power on the American Revolution at times is a long read because the war for American independence was 8 years long. It was clearly a time that tried American revolutionary souls because of the inability of Britain's enemies to establish sea control at critical times to aid the American army ashore due to the difficulty to reliably project power 3,000+ miles with large complex manpower intensive wind powered weapons of war constructed of wood, tar, canvas and tackle. The book also presents the clear failure of the Americans (other than John Paul Jones and privateers) to successfully create and operate a navy or to defend its coast against the British fleet that generally moved at will in North American waters. American fortunes changed for the positive only when fortunate French fleet timing and inept British army strategy led to Yorktown. The author documents the very costly French ambition to damage British interests with expensive fleets sent to North America and the Caribbean. Americans owe a great deal to the French king and his ministers. France and later Spain were in the war all the way to damage the United Kingdom. He gives appropriate praise to excellent French and Spanish naval ship design and nicely presents the positive result when French and Spanish commanders finally cooperate and coordinate. This book shines light on the importance of Spanish sea power in the American victory at Yorktown. The author clearly tells a story of a British navy supported by a strong economy and industrial complex that increases in strength toward the war's end. Overall this is a good book to read and own if you are interested in the Revolutionary War or naval history. My reason for withholding one star from my rating is that the few maps in the book are not clear or helpful in understanding the long distance movement of fleets. Also, assuming that it existed, there is inadequate discussion of French and Spanish grand strategy over the years. The book just documents one fleet after another being built, manned and sent west. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Different Way of Looking at the American Revolution By Mac McCormick III An extraordinary read that puts the American Revolution in a different context by viewing it through a different lens. By looking at how sea power shaped the war, Willis puts the Revolution not in the context of a regional conflict but a global conflict encompassing multiple continents. This book really is unique among the books I've read on the subject on how it treats the Revolution. I highly recommend it! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Well written and well researched. By David C. Well written and well researched. The inclusion of charts illustrating the various theaters of action is wonderful. I flipped to these frequently while reading. A very good read for anyone interested in the broader context of the American Revolution or in 18th century naval power.

A fascinating naval perspective on one of the greatest of all historical conundrums: How did thirteen isolated colonies, which in 1775 began a war with Britain without a navy or an army, win their independence from the greatest naval and military power on earth? The American Revolution involved a naval war of immense scope and variety, including no fewer than twenty-two navies fighting on five oceans? to say nothing of rivers and lakes. In no other war were so many large-scale fleet battles fought, one of which was the most strategically significant naval battle in all of British, French, and American history. Simultaneous naval campaigns were fought in the English Channel, the North and Mid-Atlantic, the Mediterranean, off South Africa, in the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean, the Pacific, the North Sea and, of course, off the eastern seaboard of America. Not until the Second World War would any nation actively fight in so many different theaters. In *The Struggle for Sea Power*, Sam Willis traces every key military event in the path to American independence from a naval perspective, and he also brings this important viewpoint to bear on economic, political, and social developments that were fundamental to the success of the Revolution. In doing so Willis offers valuable new insights into American, British, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Russian history. This unique account of the American Revolution gives us a new understanding of the influence of sea power upon history, of the American path to independence, and of the rise and fall of the British Empire. 8 pages of color illustrations

About the Author Sam Willis is a maritime historian, archaeologist, and broadcaster. He is the author of a number of books on maritime and naval history, including the *Hearts of Oak* trilogy and the *Fighting Ships* series. Willis has appeared in and presented numerous TV series, including *Shipwrecks and Castles* for BBC4 and *Operation Grand Canyon* for BBC2. He is a Visiting Fellow in Maritime and Naval History at the University of Plymouth, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.