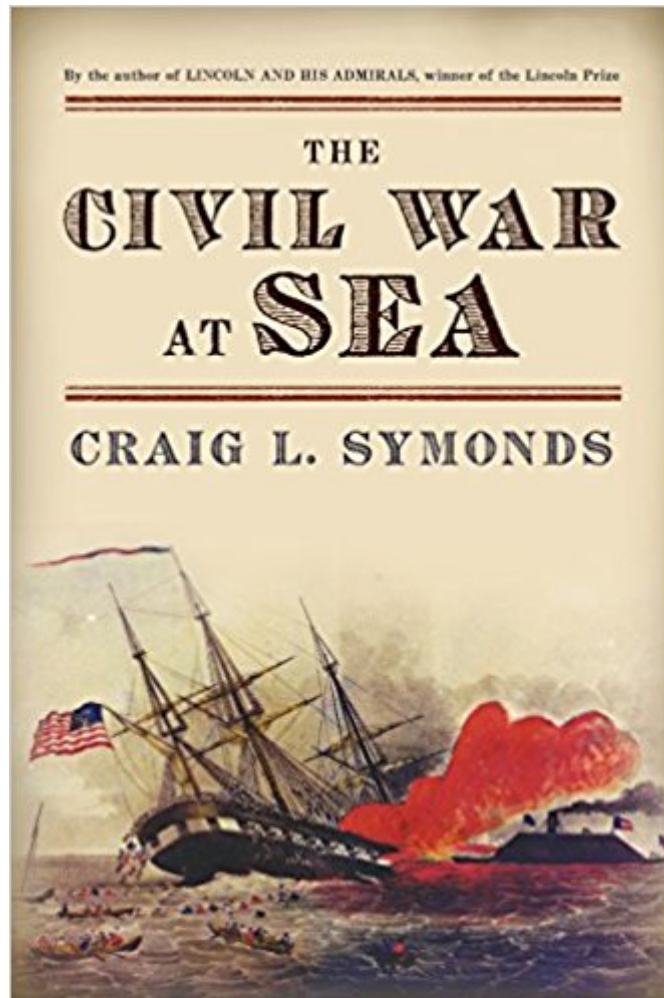




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The Civil War At Sea



Synopsis

Continuing in the vein of his Lincoln Prize-winning book *Lincoln and His Admirals*, acclaimed naval historian Craig L. Symonds presents a masterful history of the Civil War navies--both Union and Confederate--and places them within the broader context of the emerging industrial age. Symonds begins with an account of the dramatic pre-war revolution in naval technology--the advent of steam propulsion, the screw propeller, and larger and more powerful rifled guns that could fire explosive shells as well as solid shot. These extraordinary changes were epitomized in the famous "Battle of the Ironclads"--one of the great stories of the Civil War--pitting USS Monitor against the larger and more heavily armed CSS Virginia (also known as Merrimack). Symonds also offers an overview of Lincoln's blockade of the South, a vast campaign involving as many as 500 ships and 100,000 men; discusses the fierce naval war for control of the rivers in the West; and looks at the important siege of Charleston, which would last three years and involve 40,000 men and sixty warships. Symonds concludes with three key episodes from the end of the war--the dramatic Battle of Mobile Bay, where Farragut delivered his famous cry: "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!"; the battle of Wilmington, where combined naval and army forces successfully overran Fort Fisher, a giant earthwork fort called by one historian "the mightiest fortress in America"; and the remarkable cruise of the CSS Shenandoah, a round-the-world voyage of 58,000 miles, during which she captured thirty-eight prizes--mostly after Lee had surrendered, alas. The Civil War at Sea illuminates a little-discussed and greatly undervalued aspect of America's national conflict. Concise yet comprehensive, this volume is a lively addition to the field of naval history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Most military histories of the Civil War place naval campaigns in a subordinate position. Yet these campaigns were essential to the ultimate Union triumph. Naval blockades helped cripple the Southern economy, and Union mastery of the rivers eventually cut the Confederacy in half, destroying Southern long-distance commerce and troop mobility. Symonds's account of the campaigns, strategies, tactics, and personalities that characterized the naval conflict is both detailed and comprehensible for laypersons. He effectively places the naval war within the broader context of an emerging industrial age, as steam and steel led to great changes in the construction and use of warships. The author uses a topical approach, with his descriptions of the Union blockade and Confederate efforts to thwart it particularly interesting. A good addition to Civil War collections. --Jay Freeman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Well written, fast paced, and illustrated with a number of fine maps...this book provides a perfect offering for the general reader who wants to explore the Civil War at sea. However, scholars too should pay close attention, for...Symonds challenges us to think about the struggle [at sea and on the rivers] in new ways. Here we have the best in history - readable, informative, and provocative." --Historian "Symonds writes briskly and with great competence, and *The Civil War at Sea* (and on the rivers) is a masterful overview of a most meaningful topic." --Naval History "Excellent.... Crisp writing, incisive assessments of leading personalities, and attention to details often overlooked enhance Symonds's book." --CHOICE "Symond's account of the campaigns, strategies, tactics, and personalities that characterized the naval conflict is both detailed and comprehensible for laypersons. He effectively places the naval war within the broader context of an emerging industrial age, as steam and steel led to great changes in the construction and use of warships. The author uses a topical approach, with his descriptions of the Union blockade and Confederate efforts to thwart it are particularly interesting. A good addition to Civil War collections." --Booklist "Covering river and sea, tradition and technology, strategy and happenstance, admirals and sailors, this is as comprehensive and authoritative a book as has ever been written on the naval side of the Civil War. Craig Symonds' hand at the tiller guarantees superb scholarship and lucid prose. All hands aboard!" --Harold Holzer, Chairman of The Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation "Craig Symonds combines his talents as a fine historian of the U.S. Navy and of the Civil War to produce this outstanding study of the Union and Confederate navies. Focusing on the ways in which Southern technological

innovations and Northern industrial productivity shaped the strategy and tactics of the naval war, he offers important insights on the course and outcome of the conflict." --James M. McPherson

"Distinguished naval historian Craig Symonds' well-researched and engagingly written overview, *The Civil War at Sea*, touches all the major areas of the naval war, including the ships and their guns, the differing strategies pursued by the North and South, and the contest that ensued. Simply put, it is a splendid introduction to the naval side of the conflict." --Spencer C. Tucker "The Civil War at Sea is crisp and well written, well researched and insightful as well as a timeless contribution to that neglected aspect of Civil War literature." --B. Franklin Cooling "This is a superb read that melds emerging technology and captivating personalities, both of which continue to mold the U.S. Navy to this day. Craig Symonds masterfully brings this largely overlooked piece of our country's history to life, in a fine book that will appeal to a wide range of interests." --Admiral Bruce DeMars, USN (Ret)

"Craig Symonds' timely and readable tour-de-force, detailing the actions of the U.S. and Confederate navies, sheds new light on both well-known strategies, battles, and personalities as well as on those less well known. Here is a book for Civil War buffs and those looking for good history." --Vice Admiral Robert F. Dunn, USN (Ret), and President of the Naval Historical Foundation "Symonds has a gift for making complex and technical issues easy to understand, and his straightforward style makes for enjoyable reading. This book will appeal to general readers interested in either U.S. naval history or naval aspects of the Civil War. His thematic structure allows readers to understand the big picture of naval tactics and strategy without being overwhelmed by minutiae." --Library Journal "[A] comprehensive and outstanding history of the Navy during that period...Symonds' book provides an excellent introduction and an insightful look at naval strategy and technology for those familiar with the naval war and those who have devoted their Civil War study to armies and land battles." --Civil War News

A good overview, but does not go into technical detail about ships and weapons.

Bought it for my dad who loves Civil War history books. He loves it!

In July I'll celebrate my 41st year in the maritime business. I thought I knew it all, but this book brings new insights about naval warfare with each turn of the page. I usually wait until I've finished a book before reviewing it, but this time I'm making an exception. There is nothing about it that could have been better done, IMO.

this was sooo interesting. i loved it. very good indeed. will probably re-read, in fact. toodle-oo te too te too.

I got this book for my brother-in-law. He love learning about the Civil War and all aspects of it.
Thanks

Mr Symonds gives a good highlight of the various areas that the US Navy served in during the Civil War. He highlights several of the combined operations navy-army that led to victories such as Vicksburg and Mobile. He also highlighted several of the Navy leaders and their successes and failures. Altogether the type of summary that leads one to find out more in depth.

This makes for exciting reading as the author covers technology and the ironclads, the importance of the early steps in blockading the south and the importance of that blockade. The book goes into detail of the battle between the USS Monitor and CSS Virginia. It also introduces the naval heroes of the war. No Civil War library is complete without this book.

Fantastic!!!! Finally someone whose knowledge is shared on an understandable level. Watched, in awe, Craig on American TV giving presentations about the Civil War Era and the sea. I wish I could be in his classroom for a semester. As far as the book, upon finish reading it, I carry it with me as a reference. Buy it!

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