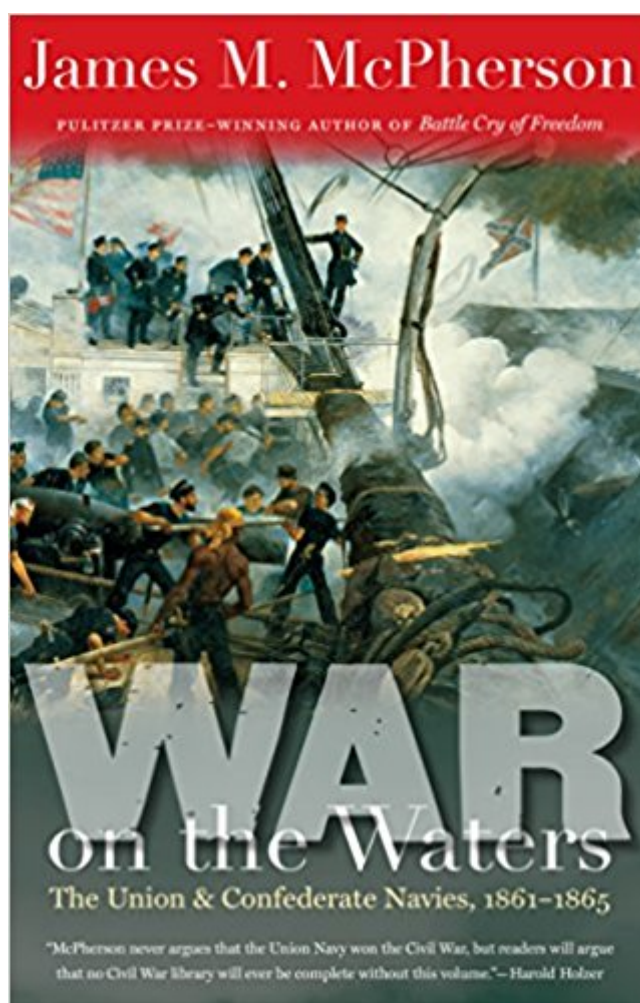


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War On The Waters: The Union And Confederate Navies, 1861-1865 (Littlefield History Of The Civil War Era)



Synopsis

Although previously undervalued for their strategic impact because they represented only a small percentage of total forces, the Union and Confederate navies were crucial to the outcome of the Civil War. In *War on the Waters*, James M. McPherson has crafted an enlightening, at times harrowing, and ultimately thrilling account of the war's naval campaigns and their military leaders. McPherson recounts how the Union navy's blockade of the Confederate coast, leaky as a sieve in the war's early months, became increasingly effective as it choked off vital imports and exports. Meanwhile, the Confederate navy, dwarfed by its giant adversary, demonstrated daring and military innovation. Commerce raiders sank Union ships and drove the American merchant marine from the high seas. Southern ironclads sent several Union warships to the bottom, naval mines sank many more, and the Confederates deployed the world's first submarine to sink an enemy vessel. But in the end, it was the Union navy that won some of the war's most important strategic victories--as an essential partner to the army on the ground at Fort Donelson, Vicksburg, Port Hudson, Mobile Bay, and Fort Fisher, and all by itself at Port Royal, Fort Henry, New Orleans, and Memphis.

Book Information

Series: Littlefield History of the Civil War Era

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press; Reprint edition (February 1, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 146962284X

ISBN-13: 978-1469622842

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 5.8 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 77 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #305,895 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Naval Operations](#) #193 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Confederacy](#) #323 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Campaigns & Battlefields](#)

Customer Reviews

A welcome addition to the literature. Those new to this aspect of the Civil War will benefit from McPherson's masterful synthesis, while specialists will find his insights equally intriguing.--The Historian[McPherson] successfully demonstrates the navy's importance to the Union victory in

1865." --H-Net ReviewsMcPherson's gift is to place this naval scholarship in the larger context of the war. . . . He follows a chronological narrative which enables him to show the ebb and flow of success and failure that characterized the fortunes of both the Union and Confederate navies.--Canadian Journal of HistoryAn outstanding survey by someone who brings to bear a grand knowledge of the complex social/political/military tapestry against which this tale unfolds. . . . An effective, eminently readable introduction to the subject, with good maps to boot.--United States Naval InstituteReaders of Battle Cry of Freedom well may wish to add this sequel to their bookshelf.--The Washington TimesA tremendous addition to Civil War literature, and McPherson has demonstrated his mastery of a new subject.--Sea HistoryWell-written. . . . A nice summary of the role that both navies played in the Civil War.--Arkansas Historical QuarterlyA concise naval history of the American Civil War.--Shipwreckology blogThe book is, quite simply, a superb synthesis. . . . [It is] eloquently written in a spare, direct style with clear and moving descriptions that bring both individuals and events to life.--International Journal of Maritime HistoryShould be read by anyone who enjoys lucid prose and should be in the library of any Civil War scholar, student, or enthusiast." --Louisiana History[James McPherson is] the dean of Civil War historians.--Publishers WeeklyRecommended. General/public/undergraduate collections.--ChoiceMcPherson writes extremely well and is able to interweave political and diplomatic events into his tale. . . . An excellent one volume overview of the naval side of the Civil War, particularly valuable to those unfamiliar with this aspect of the conflict, and also useful for the more seasoned student of the war.--The NYMAS ReviewBoth the general reader and the experienced historian can equally enjoy. . . . This one should definitely be on your reading list.--Speedreaders.infoWell-researched. . . . This important addition to scholarship on the naval aspects of the Civil War is recommended for academic audiences. With maps of several key battle sites clearly depicting ship and fort locations.--Library JournalAnyone wishing to acquire an immediate grasp on the main narrative points of the Civil War at sea, while enjoying a masterful summation of past and current historical thinking, should read this book.--Daybook[A] well-researched, dramatic story. . . . An exciting introductory read.--North Carolina Historical ReviewAs definitive as it is economical, [War on the Waters] establishes beyond question the decisive contributions of maritime power to Union victory.--Publishers Weekly starred reviewA concise, fact-filled and exciting work in the Civil War's naval aspects. . . . Shows that the Civil War--a war of intense technological innovation on both seagoing sides--was won in large part by the Union Navy.--Tampa Bay TimesMaritime history at its best.--Journal of Southern HistoryIn yet another elegant turn, historian James M. McPherson demonstrates his research and writing skills in this concise review of naval operations during the American Civil War. This volume comes

as proof positive that McPherson is entitled to all the prizes and accolades he has won in the past.--Journal of America's Military PastMcPherson's accounts of set-piece battles--Farragut's assault on Mobile Bay, the duel between the Monitor and the Merrimack--are vivid. Much of this briny story is provided through the words of the participants, and the maps are excellent throughout.--Wall Street Journal Gift Guide 2012McPherson displays his massive knowledge of the Civil War. . . . A solid contribution to Civil War scholarship.--Kirkus ReviewsAn interesting, intelligent prose that is as easy to read as it is enjoyable.--TOCWOC: A Civil War BlogA superb exploration of the role of the navy on both sides.--Sun News MiamiA sound collection-development investment.--BooklistMcPherson's erudite prose and intimate knowledge of his subject makes War on the Waters an invaluable reference for Civil War scholars and laymen alike.--Charleson Post and Courier[McPherson] uses impeccable scholarship in the service of narratives that have appeal for the general reader.--Howell Raines, Washington PostA comprehensive and compelling portrait of an oft-overlooked aspect.--Tennessee LibrariesMcPherson has written a popular history that is both approachable and fairly thorough.--Library Journal

With all the narrative grace, original scholarship, and equal grasp of both big picture and telling detail, Civil War historian nonpareil James McPherson has provided his admirers with another authoritative entry in his roster of essential books. McPherson never argues that the Union Navy won the Civil War, but readers will argue that no Civil War library will ever be complete without this volume.--Harold Holzer, Chairman, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial FoundationWonderfully written and researched. . . . Balanced, objective, and highly readable.--Howard Jones, University of AlabamaJames McPherson's many admirers in the Civil War community will be thrilled that he has turned his keen eye and eloquent pen to the naval war. In this new, concise history of the war at sea, McPherson not only tells an important story well, he shows how the Union Navy, with only five percent of Union military assets, had a disproportionate impact on the war.--Craig L. Symonds, author of Lincoln and His Admirals

The author has done a remarkable job of condensing a plethora of research material into a very readable book that effectively covers the the significant naval engagements of the Civil War to control the rivers, Southern ports, and commerce on the high seas. The ships, technologies, strategies, and their evolution are also detailed, as well as the individuals behind them. The book includes many observations from the participants obtained from journals, letters, reports, etc. as well as maps, photos, and other illustrations where appropriate.While a few reviewers have criticized the

author for focusing too much on Union Naval aspects, I felt the book is well balanced, considering the Confederate strategy was dominated by the use of static fortresses and shore batteries against Union warships. Those actions where Confederate ships were involved are effectively covered, as well as Confederate blockade running and commerce raiding, and Confederate efforts to build and acquire war ships at home and abroad. The author is even-handed in highlighting the failures and successes on both sides, and simply presents the facts for the reader to discern. He is not responsible for the outcome of engagements or the war. This is a professional and polished book from the way it is structured to the way it is written. One of the best Civil War-era books I have read.

This striking account of the Union Navy's crippling effect on the Rebel's attempts to supply and fund their cause is a masterful writing. Employing eyewitness testimony and US Navy documents, Mr. McPherson tells us the all - too truthful history of command, politics and personal feelings of those brave men who chose to fight for their freedoms on US waters, international ports and open seas. Cause and effect simplify way too easily the intrigues of this book; one which any reader of the Civil War must read for him or herself.

I have always wanted to know more about the brown water vessels of the Civil War. A time, or war, where the end of sail and beginning of steam overlap, with side wheel, screw prop, iron, timber and tin clad ships and monitors slug it out on the rivers of the interior, as well as the coasts. A great read, I just wish it had more pictures, as I had to jump to Wiki to view pictures of each belligerent ship. It should probably lose a star or two for this, but I am always in a generous mood after a good book.

I found this cell-written book a wonderful read. It vastly increased my understanding of what, to me, was a little known area of Civil War history. I gained much knowledge and tremendous respect for the naval people who fought the war on both sides and continued high regard for James McPherson as a writer and historian.

I would highly recommend this work to those looking for an introduction to the roles played by the respective navies in the Civil War. As with all of this author's previous works, it is a great read. Wonderful insights into the personal and professional motivations of some of the high ranking participants including Welles, Farragut, DuPont, Porter and Foote.

McPherson is the gold standard for comprehensive one-volume accounts on the Civil War. Though shorter than some books on the naval aspect, this is a great introduction.

That is almost all you have to say about this book. I have not read a book by McPherson that was not extremely well written, fascinating to read, educational and a can't miss good time. He is one of the preeminent Civil War scholars but writes in a style us plain old folks can read and enjoy.

Fantastic book on the naval war. Lots of good information and reads very well.

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