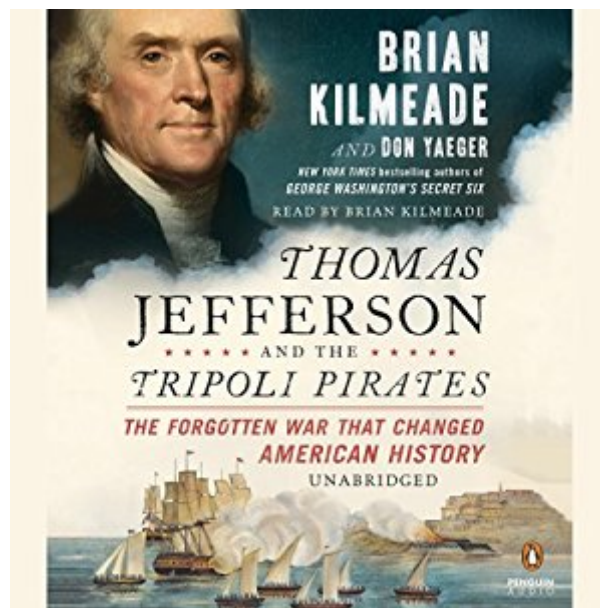


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Thomas Jefferson And The Tripoli Pirates: The Forgotten War That Changed American History



Synopsis

"The challenges we face today are not so different from Jefferson's, and we've much to learn from his boldness and from the courage of the marines and sailors who died to protect their country."
(Brian Kilmeade) This is the little-known story of how a newly independent nation was challenged by four Muslim powers and what happened when America's third president decided to stand up to intimidation. When Thomas Jefferson became president in 1801, America faced a crisis. The new nation was deeply in debt and needed its economy to grow quickly, but its merchant ships were under attack. Pirates from North Africa's Barbary Coast routinely captured American sailors and held them as slaves, demanding ransom and tribute payments far beyond what the new country could afford. Over the previous 15 years, as a diplomat and then as secretary of state, Jefferson had tried to work with the Barbary states (Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco). Unfortunately, he found it impossible to negotiate with people who believed their religion justified the plunder and enslavement of non-Muslims. These rogue states would show no mercy - at least not while easy money could be made by extorting America, France, England, and other powers. So President Jefferson decided to move beyond diplomacy. He sent the US Navy's new warships and a detachment of marines to blockade Tripoli - launching the Barbary Wars and beginning America's journey toward future superpower status. As they did in their previous best seller, George Washington's Secret Six, Kilmeade and Yaeger have transformed a nearly forgotten slice of history into a dramatic story that will keep you listening to find out what happens next.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 4 hours and 52 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Penguin Audio

Audible.com Release Date: November 3, 2015

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B0146TJT52

Best Sellers Rank: #9 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Africa #26 in Books >

Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Africa #50 in Books > History > Military > Naval

Customer Reviews

The writing is good, but the scholarship isn't. He implies that John Adams weakened the navy. In fact, Adams sold off some older ships only in order to keep Jefferson from selling off valuable frigates. Jefferson, who had a strong aversion to a strong national defense, stopped Adams's shipbuilding program and sold off many more ships at bargain basement prices. Kilmeade also says that after Polly's death, Abigail's letter to TJ began a rapprochement between him and JA. In fact, TJ's response to Abigail's letter so infuriated her that she wrote a scathing reply. I can't recommend this book as a history.

Couldn't decide between one or two stars... Thought I would error on the side of charity since I just finished Pulitzer prize winning author David McCoullough's John Adams, so I'm spoiled by his research and mature writing. Right out of the gate, had to quibble with the authors. They are completely inaccurate on Jefferson according to McCoullough. Authors rightly remark that New Englanders and Federalists were for a Navy, while Southerners and Republicans were not - this, while arguing that Jefferson was FOR the Navy. Makes no sense. Jefferson was a Southerner, a Republican and very much against a US Navy since he feared it would be used to make war on the French during the French revolution. Certainly, he was against it before he was for it, which would have been an interesting insight to include. John Adams, on the other hand, was a New Englander and a Federalist. In fact, he is the recognized founder of the Navy. He was for the Navy 100% the whole time, though he recognized funding was a problem and agreed with Jefferson that stop gap measures might be in order until Congress authorized one. It was Adam's lifelong quest to maintain a standing Navy, though he was against a standing Army. Oddly, the authors continue to give George Washington credit for the Navy through the early 1800's until Jefferson is president, ignoring that George Washington was dead and that John Adams was president for those four years. In addition, George had actually helped dissolve the Navy thinking it would draw us into international conflict. If you are going to simplify and generalize, at least get it right. Sloppy and inaccurate!

Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Our next President should be required to know this part of our history. I am not exaggerating when I say this is one of the most important books written in our lifetime. Not only is it written well, but the timing of this book could not be better. The threats we face today are similar to the threats our forefathers faced. This book reminds us of the price freedom costs. It reminds us of the endurance and strength needed to face enemies determined to take that freedom. This book is neither conservative or liberal. It is historical. I hope this book attracts both parties. The threats we face in this world to not target party lines. They

threaten what ALL Americans stand for. Thank you for writing this book!

Review of: "Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates: The Forgotten War That Changed American History," by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger. Praise for this book! I have been aware of this conflict for most of my adult life. The problem is that almost no one else was/is. The fledgling United States entered into what has become known as the Barbary Wars, between the years of 1801–1805 and 1815–1816. The Barbary States were a collection of North African states, many of which practiced state-supported piracy in order to exact tribute from weaker Atlantic powers. Morocco was an independent kingdom, with Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli owing a loose allegiance to the Ottoman Empire. In this book Kilmeade and Yaeger illustrate how U.S. merchant ships were being boarded and raided by these pirates for ransom in the Mediterranean Sea in order to fund their own personal interests. As such they were known as the "Scourge of the Mediterranean." Without giving away too much from the book, the U.S. paid very high ransom to these nations for years. In March 1785, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams went to London to negotiate with Tripoli's envoy, ambassador Sidi Haji Abdrahaman. When they enquired "concerning the ground of the pretensions to make war upon nations who had done them no injury", the ambassador replied: "It was written in their Koran, that all nations which had not acknowledged the Prophet were sinners, whom it was the right and duty of the faithful to plunder and enslave; and that every Mussulman who was slain in this warfare was sure to go to paradise." He also said that "the man who was the first to board a vessel had one slave over and above his share, and that when they sprang to the deck of an enemy's ship, every sailor held a dagger in each hand and a third in his mouth; which usually struck such terror into the foe that they cried out for quarter at once." Later, after Thomas Jefferson's inauguration, his request for authority to deal with the pirates was acted upon and Congress passed "An act for the protection of commerce and seamen of the United States against the Tripolitan cruisers", authorizing the President to "employ such of the armed vessels of the United States as may be judged requisite for protecting effectually the commerce and seamen thereof on the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean and adjoining seas." As such the statute authorized American ships to seize vessels belonging to the Bay of Tripoli, with the captured property distributed to those who brought the vessels into port. The U.S. won the war against the Pirates but still paid tribute and ransom for the release of American prisoners. After this first (Barbary) war, the problem of Barbary piracy was not fully settled. By 1807, Algiers had gone back to taking American ships and seamen hostage. Distracted by the preludes to the War of 1812, the U.S. was unable to respond to the provocation until 1815, with the Second Barbary War, in which naval victories by Commodores William

Bainbridge and Stephen Decatur led to treaties ending all tribute payments by the U.S. The Second Barbary War ended the acts of the Barbary Pirates. In short, the United States had dealt with radical Muslims perpetuating terrorism and attempting to fulfil the taking of slaves and property under their promised "that which your right hands own" religious dogma, or claiming war booty, since the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. This is nothing new. I am so proud of Kilmeade and Yaeger for bringing this very important era in American History back to the public conscious again. For the critics who claim that this book is dry and reads "like history" do not be deceived. It is history, but it is exciting and gallant. Patriots who acted in our Nation's best interests who have been forgotten by time are given a new life to a new generation. Well done. Five stars without hesitation or reservation.

A real pleasure to be introduced (and re-introduced) to the historic persons and their heroic actions during this very challenging period in early American history. (Some will reappear a decade or two later to again serve our country valiantly.) All the characters are very well described as to position, influence, reasons why they are there. Easy to read. Fast moving and captivating: I was disappointed when I reached the epilogue.

A disappointing and distorted point of view. For a better history of the Barbary Pirates, I would recommend, Henry Adams (President John Adams grandson), A History of the United States from 1801 to 1809. He was an historian who used original documents in his work.

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