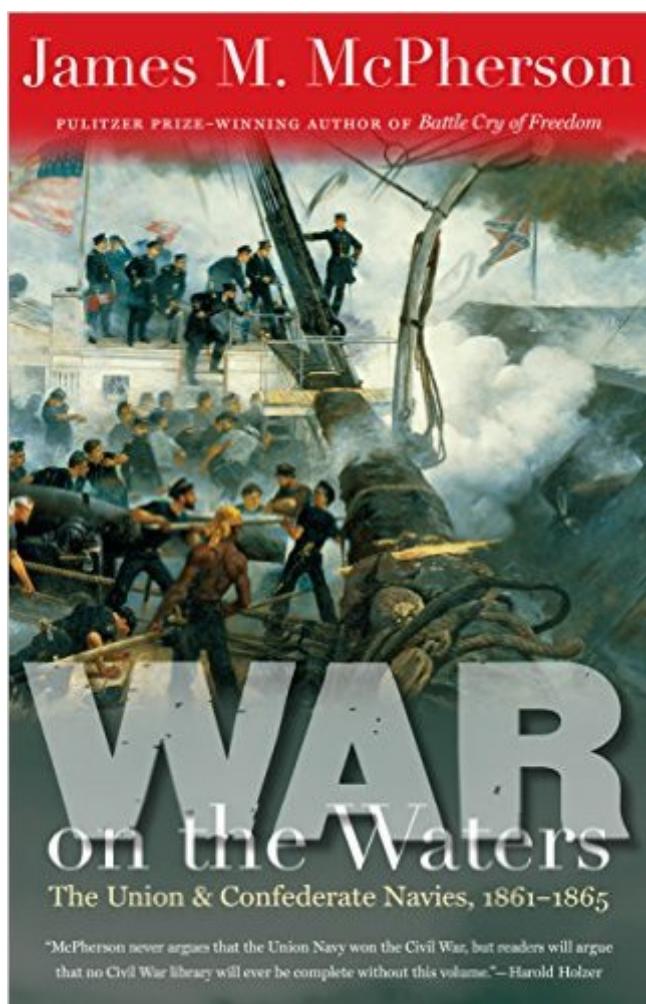


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War On The Waters: The Union And Confederate Navies, 1861-1865 (Littlefield History Of The Civil War Era)



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

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Customer Reviews

In his breadth of knowledge, lucid writing, and passion for his subject, James McPherson remains among the best of Civil War historians. For many years Professor of history at Princeton University, McPherson has the rare gift of appealing to both academic and lay readers. In his latest book, "War

on the Waters: The Union & Confederate Navies, 1861 -- 1865 (2012), McPherson focuses on the role of the navies in the Civil War. He argues persuasively that students of the war tend to underestimate the importance of the navies in the war's outcome. This is particularly the case, he argues, for the Union Navy. The book enhanced my knowledge of a sometimes overlooked aspect of the war. The focus of the book is on the Union Navy in that it was far larger than the Confederate Navy and ultimately more successful. Thus, McPerson begins by quoting Abraham Lincoln in 1863 on the navy's role in the Vicksburg campaign. "Nor must Uncle Sam's Web-feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present. Not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and made their tracks." In McPherson's book, the reader follows "Uncle Sam's Web-feet" in the oceans, rivers, swamps, and bayous. McPherson also praises the Confederate navy for its ingenuity and spirit and for doing much with little. Without the industrial resources of the North, the Confederacy led in the development of ironclad ships, torpedoes, and submarines. In its Secretary of the Navy, Steven Mallory, the Confederacy had a gifted and innovative leader whom McPherson obviously admires. In a relatively short book McPherson explores naval battles, large and small, on the sea and on the rivers.

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