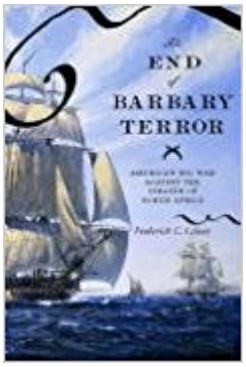
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The End Of Barbary Terror: America's 1815 War Against The Pirates Of North Africa



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Synopsis

When Barbary pirates captured an obscure Yankee sailing brig off the coast of North Africa in 1812, enslaving eleven American sailors, President James Madison first tried to settle the issue through diplomacy. But when these efforts failed, he sent the largest American naval force ever gathered to that time, led by the heroic Commodore Stephen Decatur, to end Barbary terror once and for all. Drawing upon numerous ship logs, journals, love letters, and government documents, Frederick C. Leiner paints a vivid picture of the world of naval officers and diplomats in the early nineteenth century, as he recreates a remarkable and little known episode from the early American republic. Leiner first describes Madison's initial efforts at diplomacy, sending Mordecai Noah to negotiate, reasoning that the Jewish Noah would fare better with the Islamic leader. But when the ruler refused to ransom the Americans--"not for two millions of dollars"--Madison declared war and sent a fleet to North Africa. Decatur's squadron dealt quick blows to the Barbary navy, dramatically fighting and capturing two ships. Decatur then sailed to Algiers. He refused to go ashore to negotiate--indeed, he refused to negotiate on any essential point. The ruler of Algiers signed the treaty--in Decatur's words, "dictated at the mouths of our cannon"--in twenty-four hours. The United States would never pay tribute to the Barbary world again, and the captive Americans were set free--although in a sad, ironic twist, they never arrived home, their ship being lost at sea in heavy weather. Here then is a real-life naval adventure that will thrill fans of Patrick O'Brian, a story of Islamic terrorism, white slavery, poison gas, diplomatic intrigue, and battles with pirates on the high seas.

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Customer Reviews

This unevenly paced military history gives an exhaustive portrait of the little-known war waged by the United States to stop the enslaving of American sailors by north African pirates. For centuries prior to the 1815 war, the kingdoms of Algeria, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli engaged in a system of state-sponsored piracy, capturing ships cruising the Mediterranean (and even raiding coastal European villages) and using the captors-Leiner estimates as many as a million Europeans had been enslaved-for slave labor in their home ports. When American sailors became targets, the U.S. government could either pay the ransom or go to war. Leiner does an excellent job of describing the personalities involved and depicting the heated naval battles, but the U.S.'s decisive and nearly immediate success in a very short war undermines Leiner's story; once the battles are over, the narrative drifts into the dull terrain of treaties and diplomacy, and the parallels Leiner notes between Islamic terrorism then and now fail to gel into any larger conclusion. Leiner is a talented writer and researcher, but the little-known campaign he chronicles fizzles out too quickly. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"The book recounts a stunning military success. With a mix of bravery and luck, Decatur defeated two enemy ships on his way to Algiers. Within 48 hours of arriving on the shore of the most powerful Barbary state, Decatur was able to force peace on American terms ('dictated at the mouths of our cannon,' as he later said). The U.S.'s infant Navy had scored a victory that had eluded European powers for nearly three centuries."--Jonathan Karl, Wall Street Journal"A fascinating account of what popular historians now refer to as America's first war against state-sponsored terrorism.... Leiner, drawing on everything from ship logs, journals, and love letters to published papers and official documents, writes of the squadron of ten ships that sailed into Barbary territory on June 17, 1815, and--in quick succession--defeated or captured the opposing Algerine warships."--Library Journal"A solid study written in a lively style about the role of the U.S. Navy and State Department in terminating state-sponsored piracy in the Mediterranean."--The Journal of Military History"Frederick C. Leiner's dramatic history of Stephen Decatur's mission to Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli in 1815 is not only a vivid narrative of America's largest and most successful overseas expedition during the Age of Sail, it is also an illuminating micro-history of the culture, politics, and personalities of America's first war against state-sponsored terror."--Craig L. Symonds, author of Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles That Shaped American History"Frederick Leiner's The End of Barbary Terror is not only an exciting and well-told sea story, but a well-researched reminder that with regard to transnational terrorism, the only thing new in the world is the history that you don't know."--Dr. John F. Lehman, former Secretary of the Navy and member of the 9/11 Commission, and author of On Seas of Glory:

Heroic Men, Great Ships, and Epic Battles of the American Navy"Frederick Leiner has taken an almost forgotten moment in early U.S. history--the 1812 capture by Algerines of an obscure Yankee sailing brig--and by focusing exclusively on that incident and the events deriving from it has woven a remarkably complex yet totally coherent tapestry of the times. There are heroes and villains galore, mysterious secret agents and conniving heads of state; there are wars and other international crises, numerous historical set pieces and acts of derring-do. All told, there’s enough spectacle and drama to satisfy any reader."--James Tertius de Kay, author of A Rage for Glory: The Life of Commodore Stephen Decatur, USN

Interesting part of U.S. history.

OK read. Lots of dates and names; not much description of the action. Historically accurate but dry.

ok

This book details a forgotten tale of American valor against Muslim states which terrorized and enslaved the Christians of America and Europe. It offers a haunting reminder that our nation has always faced Islamic terror, and it stands as a witness to the superiority of simply winning rather than imagining our role as that of a nation builder. The book is well researched, as I’ve just stated, relevant to our day and time in many ways.

I actually bought this book at one of those militaria shows that have plastic models, tin soldiers, and the like. It is a most outstanding piece of work, which was very difficult to put down once I began reading it. The writer did an excellent job of laying out the history of piracy in the Mediterranean, the American politics of the day, and more than aptly described the beginning of the Naval tradition of 6-month Mediterranean deployments.Do not delay in purchasing this book. When you read about the courage and the daring of Stephen Decatur and his crews you will swell with pride at being an American. After the battles, a North African sailor hails to Decatur from his ship as they pass each other in opposite directions: "Where are you going?" Decatur answers: "Wherever I please!"

A good object lesson to people who think that you can appease or negotiate with bullies. The USA was a little country that had just gone through three years of war with Great Britain, a mighty sea and financial power. Most European coutries simply paid annual extortion fees to the pirates to

protect their shipping and hopefully send the pirates against their competitors' ships. The USA sent ships and solved the problem. This caused real consternation among the European population when they saw that the USA could send ships all the way across the Atlantic and fix the problem while their governments could only send taxpayer money year after year. Not only did the USA not pay any extortion money but they also returned many of the enslaved mariners to their home countries. Clearly Europeans didn't learn anything from this as we saw in the 20th century.I give this a four due to several editing errors. It's not a long book so proofreading it should not have been a big burden.

While many might believe that the American entanglement with the Islamic world began with the first Iraq War, or at the earliest, the founding of Israel, we have actually been fighting with this area of the world much longer, even as far back as the first years of the United States. Of course, there are many differences between this early conflict and our current ones, so historical comparisons should not be too easily made between our current war and the one against the Barbary Terror, as chronicled by Frederic Leiner.One significant difference is location: instead of the Middle East, the Barbary pirates operated in North Africa, particularly in the Barbary states of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli (the last with the famous shores of Tripoli). These pirates (or corsairs) actually worked for the local states, making them more akin to privateers. The goal was simple: steal the goods on merchant ships and enslave the crewmen, with the intention of ransoming them. There was an alternative, however: paying an annual tribute to each state, or what may now be thought of as protection money.The Barbary states did rather well with this system, terrorizing the ships of the Mediterranean. Few seemed willing to do anything about the corsairs. This changed at the conclusion of the War of 1812, when James Madison authorized a war against the largest (and most duplicitous) state, Algiers. Led by naval war hero Stephen Decatur, a fleet would soon force Algiers into capitulation; what was worse for the Barbary states was their faÃƒÆ'Ã Â§ade of strength was broken, and soon the world power England would turn its wrath towards these countries (which were technically part of the Ottoman Empire).Another big difference with our current conflicts is the softening effect of time. With two centuries having gone by, the Barbary states seem more exotic than evil. Although generally a nasty lot, nowadays corsairs tend to be romanticized like all pirates (as the success of Pirates of the Caribbean attests). There has even been a casino called the Barbary Coast; I think it will be quite a few years till we are able to look nostalgically back at Sadaam Hussein and start naming hotels after his regime.Leiner does a nice job of writing, as his title states, of the End of the Barbary Terror. This is, in a way, an adventure story that we already

know the end of. It is also, despite the fact that it is almost forgotten nowadays, an important chapter in American history, and represents our first real military rout of an opponent. Leiner tells a good story and puts it in the proper historical context; if you enjoy reading about American or naval history, this is a book to read.

A rich and detailed look at an obscure event in U.S. naval history. "The End of Barbary Terror" describes a rather dashing adventure by a young U.S. Navy fresh off the Battle of 1812 with the British. Despite these challenges a band of brash and confident officers deployed the bulk of the U.S. fleet to the Med to destroy the Algerian Fleet and force the return of U.S. hostages and the end of payments to Algeria.The book proves that the U.S. has been combating Islamic forces since its earlier days. While this was a very different war, certain similar ties between then and now can be seenThe author spends considerable team telling not only the operational naval portions of the battle, which were not exactly very exciting, but he focuses on the complicated political battles between naval leadership and national politicians. The author's naval knowledge seemed solid, but the description focus mainly on the officers, little is known or discussed about the rest of the crew. The same can be said of the Algerians. The great majority of sources were American, so what was going through the minds of Algerian leadership and naval officers could only be guessed.The British Attack on Algiers was well done, and more riveting then the rather limited engagements between the U.S. and Algeria described earlier in the book. I recommend this book to any serious reader of naval history, who enjoys diving into the deep details of the U.S. Navy circa 1815.

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