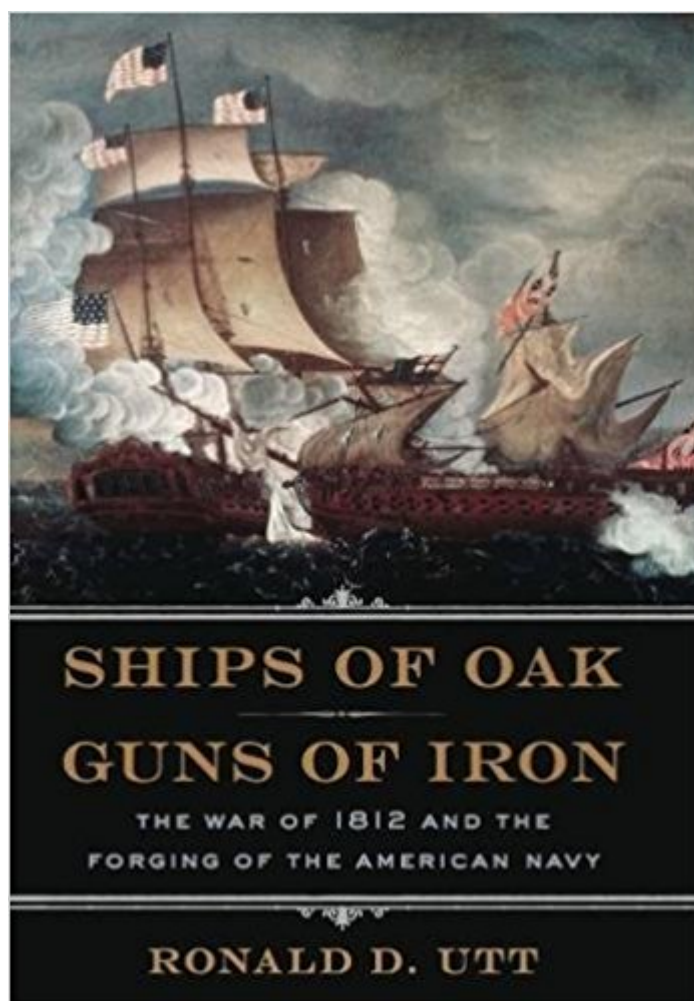


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# **Ships Of Oak, Guns Of Iron: The War Of 1812 And The Forging Of The American Navy**



## Synopsis

The War of 1812 is typically noted for a handful of events: the burning of the White House, the rise of the Star Spangled Banner, and the battle of New Orleans. But in fact the greatest consequence of that distant conflict was the birth of the U.S. Navy. During the War of 1812, America's tiny fleet took on the mightiest naval power on earth, besting the British in a string of victories that stunned both nations. In his new book, *Ships of Oak and Guns of Iron: The War of 1812 and the Birth of the American Navy*, author Dr. Ronald Utt not only sheds new light on the naval battles of the War of 1812 and how they gave birth to our nation's great navy, but tells the story of the War of 1812 through the portraits of famous American war heroes. From the cunning Stephen Decatur to the fierce David Porter, *Ships of Oak and Guns of Iron* relates how thousands of American men and boys gave better than they got against the British Navy. The great age of fighting sail is as rich in heroic drama as any epoch. Dr. Utt's *Ships of Oak and Guns of Iron* retrieves the American chapter of that epoch from unjustified obscurity, and offers readers an intriguing chronicle of the War of 1812 as well as a unique perspective on the birth of the U.S. Navy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Forgotten War&#151;Forgotten No Longer All of us have heard of the War of 1812, but how many of us actually know anything about it&#151;about Andrew Jackson's rousing defense of New Orleans, the burning of the White House, and most especially the swashbuckling war at sea in which the young United States Navy manhandled the greatest naval power on the planet? If you've ever wanted to learn about the United States Navy's first great war at sea, you're in for a

treat with Ships of Oak, Guns of Iron. From his years of research and passion for the age of fighting sail, author Ronald Utt provides a panoramic view of the naval War of 1812; rich in high-seas heroism, captivating in anecdote and detail; rescuing some of the Navy's greatest historical triumphs from undeserved oblivion. Ships of Oak, Guns of Iron is a stirring account of how an American fleet of only seventeen ships bested the five-hundred-ship-strong Royal Navy in a string of early victories that astonished both sides, highlighting how American courage, gunnery, and skill could prove itself against the most daunting odds. Ronald Utt paints vivid portraits of the heroes; including Stephen Decatur, James Don't Give Up the Ship! Lawrence, Oliver Hazard Perry, and Francis Scott Key; to give readers an unforgettable experience of the War of 1812. If you are interested in American history, the history of the United States Navy, or just plain real-life adventure stories, you owe it to yourself to read Ships of Oak, Guns of Iron.

**PRAISE FOR Ships of Oak, Guns of Iron** At a time when America seems to flinch at threats from the world's petty tyrants, our forefathers' defiance two centuries ago of the mightiest empire on earth should stiffen our spines. Ron Utt's inspiring narrative reminds us that this nation has never failed to produce heroes when they're needed most. Edwin Feulner, president of the Heritage Foundation; Few episodes in American history are as rich in heroism and drama as the War of 1812, yet it has been crowded out of the popular imagination by the Revolution and the Civil War. Ron Utt's riveting account of the infant republic's epic struggle on land and sea against the greatest power of the age will make you wonder how this could have become America's forgotten war. Stephen Moore, author and economist; In Ships of Oak, Guns of Iron, Ron Utt draws on previously overlooked material on the War of 1812 to vividly bring America's second war of Independence back to life on this its 200th anniversary. The book is special for its account of the forgotten but heroic free blacks who played a crucial role in defending America from the British invaders. Fred Siegel, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, scholar in residence at St. Francis College

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just an incredible book, some fantastic stories of the War of 1812 and the heroism and above-and-beyond the call of duty actions of so many of our troops during differing aspects of the war. a great example of truth being more enjoyable and interesting than fiction. well written, true page turner in some sections!

Author Ronald Utt has written an excellent work on the US Navy and the War of 1812! This is an excellent book: well-written, comprehensive, well-researched. This is a work of history that will be hard to put down because it often reads like an adventure novel!The book begins with the situation in the early nineteenth century and the many issues and conflicts that brought the young United States and Great Britain to war. The author then tells the story of the War of 1812, alternating between war at sea and war on land. Battles are cogently explained and major personalities are brought to light, often with short bios. Ship-to-ship combat is well covered including maps of the movements of the various ships during engagements. The author wisely uses many first-hand accounts to allow the reader to hear of deeds from the men who were there."Ships Of Oak, Guns Of Iron" tells the tale of the war at sea, both on the seas and the Great lakes. It covers the Americans' big 44-gun frigates and their victories and losses versus British warships - but everyone covers those. Author Ronald Utt also covers the smaller ships such as the Essex, Wasp and Hornet. Great Lakes naval battles such as Oliver Hazard Perry's victory at Put In Bay and the crucial ship combat on Lake Champlain are also covered. Unlike many books on the War of 1812, the author covers the American privateers who devastated Britain's economy by taking or sinking so many merchant ships.The author covers land campaigns in the north from the "Old Northwest" to Canada, New York and Maine. These battles, by land or water, were crucial in deciding if the United States would keep the vast territory it won in the War of Independence in what would become Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan. The author explains the situation not only from the point of view of Americans and British, but also the Amerindians who were also fighting for their homeland.The war on the Atlantic coast

including campaigns against Washington and the aborted attack on Baltimore. The war in the south is well covered in Jackson's campaigns against the Creeks and eventually the battle for New Orleans with the city and the whole Mississippi country in jeopardy. The author does a fine job of writing a no-holds-barred account, showing bravery, professionalism and boldness as well as incompetence, cowardice and just plain stupidity on both sides of the conflict. I was amazed by the willingness of President Madison and those in his administration to appoint military commanders based solely upon their political affiliation - even men who had no military ability at all! The reader will be surprised by the conflicts between men who are supposed to be on the same side and yet work to thwart each other! This is a fine book that any reader of early American history will enjoy and learn from. I recommend this book with five stars.

Bought it for my father-in-law, he hasn't put it down

Ronald Utt's title is somewhat deceptive. His book would seem to be about the US Navy during the war of 1812, but actually Utt gives almost as much attention to the land war, so it is not as focused as Ian Toll's excellent *Six Frigates*, published in 2006, which considered only the sea war. However, Utt handles his material well. He knows about ships and sailing, writes tellingly about the strengths and weaknesses of commanders, and accurately describes battles and maneuvers both on sea and land. Don't look here for the economic and political background of the war. Utt is concerned chiefly with armed struggle. But within those limits he has provided a fine overview of America's "second" war of independence.

One thing I love to read is entertaining non-fiction. History (for example) that is written in the easy to read manner of a good novel. This book fits the bill perfectly. You can learn all a layman needs to know about the War of 1812 and its causes, and still have a enjoyable read. A real page turner. The naval battle scenes are particularly well done and exciting!

Excellent book! This one really gets you inside the history; it weaves an intricate tapestry of the people, places and events that culminated into the war of 1812. Utt's use of diagrams that show where the ship engagements were fought and how they maneuvered the vessels is very good. Loaded with maps, diagrams and color plates this is history in its most excellent. On a separate note: I just flew back from San Francisco this past week for some training and the plane skimmed above the Great Lakes. When we were above Lake Erie I was thinking: Ok, so Detroit is about there, and

the Battle of Lake Erie was right about there..., it's that kind of book. If you like history, and you like American history, and you like the great age of sail, then this book is for you. Read it; you won't be disappointed.

I chanced upon this work by Ron Utt and must say I was engrossed from the first page all the way through. He writes at a lively pace and has a gift for bringing these characters to life. The book is more focused on the naval conflict than the land battles, but it was actually something of an eye opener for me because I had not realized, despite many years of historical reading, that we had such a devastating impact on the British navy as well as its commerce. Clearly, Utt has a fascination with the era of sailing ships and his knowledge shines through. Utt's writing style reminds me of my favorite historian Barbara Tuchman who had a gift for making history an interesting story. I highly commend this book to any student of American history, or maybe anyone with an urge to read up on a chapter of our history that rarely gets much attention.

Found myself thinking "ah crap" whenever the English took an American ship as a prize while reading this book. I'm not very jingoistic at all and harbor England no ill will. But this book brought it out in me. War of 1812 is little talked about...kind of a side note to the Great War, WWII and for the US Vietnam or Korea. But it was really important in defining the US and Canada as legit countries, and certainly introduced the world to a new upstart that nobody wanted a piece of...especially on water...and doubly especially on the high seas against America's new heavy frigates. USS Constitution is docked right around the corner...will be heading over to the museum with renewed interest in Old Ironsides. Well written!

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