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The Six Frigates: The Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy

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approach to complex problems. This chapter concludes with a call to develop military and political strategy that demonstrates the importance of nation building in the aftermath of war—a valuable lesson to current leaders attempting to cope with the ongoing global war against terrorism.

On the debit side, Husted's approach is frequently choppy and lacks adequate transitions. Though he provides a list of Marshall's salient leadership principles throughout the text, a concluding paragraph summarizing each section's salient points would have greatly enhanced the overall text. So too would an introductory chapter outlining the broad context of the areas on which the author concentrates.

These observations aside, Husted has produced a valuable leadership primer that will be well received by military officers, regardless of rank or position. As do the military's senior service colleges, *Rubrics of Leadership* urges understanding of the importance of positive relationships with civilians at all levels of government and business. It is here that Husted makes his greatest contribution.

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Toll, Ian. *The Six Frigates: The Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006. 592pp. \$27.95

Many books have been written about the history of the American navy, but this one is of particular excellence. While truly a scholarly work, this book contains many attributes of a historical novel. Any reader with an interest in

either the U.S. Navy or early American history will find it hard to put down.

Toll begins his story with a review of the Continental navy and its limited value during the American Revolution, then moves seamlessly into the post-revolutionary period. America's colonial experience and the needs of the newly formed nation had a direct effect on the founding of a navy. Pro-navy views were largely tied to the merchant interests of the north, championed by leaders such as John Adams and Alexander Hamilton. The foes of a naval force were essentially southern based and included James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, who favored domestic development, westward expansion, and agrarian interests.

In March 1794, these political and economic interests were rooted deeply in the American experience, and were the seeds of an acrimonious debate in Congress that preceded House and Senate authorization for the construction of six frigates to keep the sea-lanes safe for America's large merchant fleet. They were originally designated merely as frigates *A* through *F*. The first five names—*United States*, *President*, *Congress*, *Constitution*, and *Constellation*—were chosen by George Washington from a list of alternatives suggested by the War Office; subsequently, the *Chesapeake* was named.

The debate over the question of who would design the ships began in the wake of the authorization to build them. The nation's most respected ship designers, Joshua Humphreys and Josiah Fox, clashed over the most desirable warship design, with Humphreys being the victor. In the end, the six frigates emerged as the most powerful of their type in the world, equipped to serve as the nation's first blue-water force.

The first trial by combat of the new navy was against the French in the undeclared “Quasi-War” of 1797–1800, which was fought to protect American merchant shipping. The next naval action occurred in the Mediterranean during 1803–1805, when war was waged against the pirates of Tripoli. However, the true test for the Navy, of course, occurred during the War of 1812, when the value of the ships and their crews was proved beyond doubt. The author’s descriptions of the ships, their handling, and the combat actions is excellent, and his portrayal of the people is equally impressive. The positive and negative characteristics of the civilian leaders—including John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison—as well as of the naval officers who became well known in American history (Stephen Decatur, William Bainbridge, Thomas Truxtun, Edward Preble, and James Lawrence) are all examined.

This is Ian Toll’s first book. It is a product of his sailing experience, interest in the period, writing skill, and thorough research. The result is an excellent work that should become a permanent part of the library of anyone with an interest in American naval history.

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O’Rourke, Ronald. *The Impact of Chinese Naval Modernization and the Future of the United States Navy*. New York: Nova, 2006. 106pp. \$79

Well written, succinct, and timely, this balanced assessment of Chinese naval weaknesses and strengths offers specific technological development and procurement alternatives to inform

Washington’s decision making. O’Rourke is a naval issues analyst for the Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the Library of Congress. Specialists will want to consult his related product, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress*. First published in November 2006, the latter report has been updated regularly. Each report contains details that the other does not.

Like its CRS counterpart, O’Rourke’s present study draws on a variety of U.S. government analyses; congressional testimony; and articles from the media, think tanks, and academia. Additional details are provided in an appendix. Charged with presenting different points of view, with an emphasis on official analyses, O’Rourke cannot be held responsible for disagreements concerning the underlying assumptions or conclusions of his sources. It should also be emphasized that Beijing’s continuing reluctance to offer detailed information on the purpose or scope of many aspects of its rapid military development both raises concerns in Washington and makes it difficult for policy makers there to rule out worst-case scenarios.

O’Rourke has explicitly chosen to focus his report by limiting the attention paid to such issues of potential relevance to the U.S. Navy as China’s aerospace development. In light of recent significant Chinese achievements in this realm (including the acknowledged testing of an antisatellite weapon on 11 January 2007), however, such factors should perhaps be integrated into follow-on studies by O’Rourke and his colleagues. After all, China’s ability to project naval power farther from its shores will hinge on developing effective air defense for surface assets. Certain military