

1993

To the Shores of Tripoli: The Birth of the U.S. Navy and Marines,

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Recommended Citation

Palmer, Michael A. (1993) "To the Shores of Tripoli: The Birth of the U.S. Navy and Marines,," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 46 : No. 3 , Article 22.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol46/iss3/22>

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flow. If the reader is primarily interested in the activities on Lake Erie, for example, he or she must scan the table of contents carefully to mark out the material relating to that subject. This is inconvenient at best and downright annoying at worst.

However, Dudley must be complimented for assembling a collection of sources that provide a valuable look at the early years of our naval establishment as it faced its first real test. He has certainly made a significant contribution to the historical record of this period, and it is hoped that the project will continue with the timely publication of the third and final volume in this series.

In conclusion, documentary histories are often difficult to assemble and even more difficult to read, but Dudley has succeeded in overcoming these barriers so well that his work deserves a place in every university and public library.

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Whipple, A.B.C. *To the Shores of Tripoli: The Birth of the U.S. Navy and Marines*. New York: William Morrow, 1991. 357pp. \$23

Whipple is a former editor and writer of Time-Life Books and the author of numerous maritime titles. He has produced a history that is fast-paced and well written.

Whipple's narrative does not disappoint. The images of newly inde-

pendent Americans clashing on the seas with the corsairs of the Barbary coast, engaging in hand-to-hand combat in the approaches to Tripoli harbor, bombarding the city itself, or leading a hodgepodge army of mercenaries across the Western Desert to Derna are the stuff of Hollywood. (Although I would not advise anyone to waste their time watching *Tripoli*, with John Wayne.)

Unfortunately, while the author may be a master of the sea tale, he clearly is not an expert on the history of the early U.S. Navy. He suggests that the navalist-antinavalist debate in the United States was purely sectional. It was not. He terms the British 4th-rate *Leopard* a frigate. He incorrectly writes that "fleet maneuvers and coordinated support of army troops" characterized the American naval experience during the Revolution. He writes of broadsides being fired Hollywood style, *en masse*, whereas in the American service the guns were fired in rotation as they bore. He has even misspelled the name of one of the U.S. Navy's early heroes—Captain Thomas "Truxton" (Truxtun).

Whipple's major failing is his determination to portray the Tripolitan War as the conflict that shaped the American sea services. Such a claim is both unoriginal and inaccurate. Glenn Tucker made the same argument in his similarly titled *Dawn Like Thunder: The Barbary Wars and the Birth of the U.S. Navy* (1963). Statements such as that the Tripolitan War was the United States' "first foreign war," and one that witnessed the operation of

the nation's "largest naval fleet," are inaccurate.

The United States' first foreign war was the undeclared naval war with France, the Quasi-War, fought between 1798 and 1801. While it is true that trouble with the Barbary pirates prompted Americans to begin the construction of six frigates in March 1794, it was the crisis with France, which began three years later, that caused Congress to refine a program that had stalled, to reestablish the Marine Corps, and man the service's ships. Virtually all of the officers and warships that appear in the pages of Whipple's narrative first entered service and made their marks during the war with France. During the Quasi-War the U.S. Navy deployed as many as four squadrons to the Caribbean, and over twenty men-of-war—a force larger than that deployed to the Mediterranean. The Americans also developed the logistical know-how to conduct sustained operations far from American ports. Even the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps activities ashore (political intrigue and involvement in the affairs of Hispaniola (Haiti) in 1799 and 1800, and a small amphibious landing on Curacao in 1800) foreshadowed the dramatic cross-desert trek of William Eaton and Presley O'Bannon.

While Whipple is guilty of trying to oversell the extent to which the Tripolitan War served as the catalyst for the "birth" of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, the author is to be applauded for stressing the fact that the conflict was "America's first war with

an Arab tyrant." Too often, Americans and Europeans view the U.S. Navy's presence in the Mediterranean as uniquely an element of the Cold War. In fact, the United States has maintained a naval presence in the Mediterranean for about 150 of the last 200 years! There are, as Whipple points out, similarities between the American effort to face down the Tripolitan bashaw's state-sponsored terrorism and such efforts in the 1980s as the April 1986 El Dorado Canyon strikes against Muammar Qadhafi's Libya. For Americans, hostage-taking, limited military actions, and attempts to undermine Arab states politically are nothing new.

That being the case, there are insights to be gained from the Barbary War experience, and from Whipple's book. I would note especially one of the author's conclusions: that "a hostage situation nearly always requires some sort of negotiation, however unpleasant the prospect," a reality this nation's leaders have recently had to relearn, and ought not again to forget.

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Swanson, Carl E. *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739–1748*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1991. 299pp. (No price given)

This is a study of privateering in colonial America during the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739–1748), also known