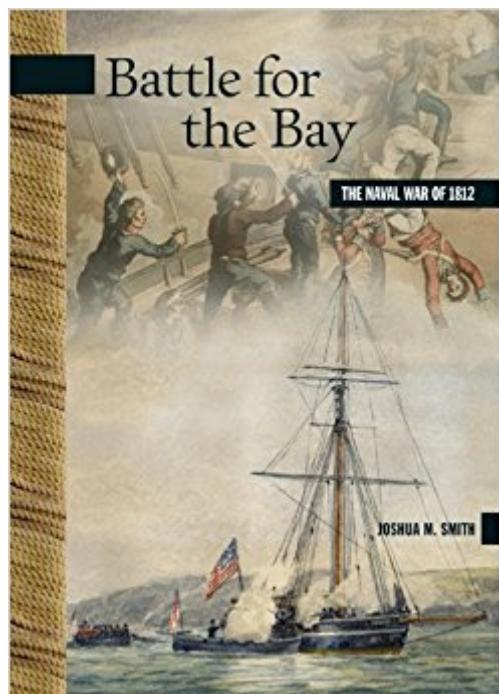


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Battle For The Bay: The Naval War Of 1812 (New Brunswick Military Heritage Series)



Synopsis

As the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 approaches, a new chapter in the history of the war is being opened for the first time. Although naval battles raged on the Great Lakes, combat between privateers and small government vessels boiled in the Bay of Fundy and the Gulf of Maine. Three small warships – the Provincial sloop Brunswicker, His Majesty's schooner Bream, and His Majesty's brig of war Boxer – played a vital role in defending the eastern waters of British North America in this crucial war. The crews of these hardy ships fought both the Americans and the elements – winter winds, summer fog, and the fierce tidal currents of the Bay of Fundy – enduring the all-too-real threats of shipwreck and possible capture and imprisonment. In peacetime, these patrol craft enforced maritime law. In wartime, they engaged in a guerre de course, attacking the enemy's commercial shipping while protecting their own. Now, for the first time, Joshua Smith tells the full story of the battle for the bay.

Book Information

Series: New Brunswick Military Heritage Series (Book 17)

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Goose Lane Editions; First edition edition (April 22, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0864926448

ISBN-13: 978-0864926449

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.5 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,780,860 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 in Books > History > Americas > Canada > War of 1812 #83 in Books > History > Americas > Canada > 19th Century #500 in Books > History > Americas > Canada > Pre-Confederation

Customer Reviews

"Joshua M. Smith's Battle for the Bay is a perfect addition to Maine bookshelves." (William David Barry Portland Press Herald 2011-10-02)"Smith's account is well researched, immensely readable, and another excellent addition to the growing New Brunswick Military Heritage series. Combined with clear maps and well-chosen artwork, this book provides the perfect starting point to a war enthusiast's driving expedition down the eastern seaboard." (Joel Ralph Canada's History 2011-06-12)"Battle for the Bay fills an important gap in our knowledge of the War of 1812 in the

Maritimes." (John Boileau Chronicle Herald 2011-05-29) "It's a wonderfully fun short book about a side of the War of 1812 that is otherwise seldom seen." (Bill Bean Waterloo Region Record 2012-05-26)

Two hundred years ago, the winds of war swept the United States and British North America, fanning the conflict raging on land and at sea. Naval combat churned the waters of the Great Lakes while privateers and government vessels engaged in a guerre de course in the Bay of Fundy and the Gulf of Maine. In Battle for the Bay, Joshua M. Smith tells the complete story of the warships that defended the eastern waters of British North America. Fighting the Americans and the elements, and risking shipwreck, capture, and imprisonment, the crews of the Provincial sloop Brunswicker, His Majesty's schooner Bream, and His Majesty's brig of war Boxer fought for King and country "and a little profit. Although seldom operating in squadrons, these naval vessels escorted British ships between ports, patrolled the Bay for hostile forces, and raided the enemy coast, playing a vital role in this crucial war. Battle for the Bay: The Naval War of 1812 is Volume 17 in the New Brunswick Military Heritage Series.

While I would expect the Canadian descendants of the 1812 Tories to have a Canadian view of the war, the bait for buying the book originally led me to expect more about the American feeling for the war and the battles between the American and the British contestants. Battle for the Bay: The Naval War of 1812 (New Brunswick Military Heritage Series)

The title is somewhat misleading in that this booklet just scratches the surface in discussing combat in and about the Bay of Fundy. For example, Sherbrooke's 1814 Penobscot expedition leading to the capture of Castine, occupation of Belfast, sacking of Hampden and Bangor as well as the taking of all of Maine east of the Penobscot is not mentioned although this territory was coveted by New Brunswick officials so as to improve communications with Quebec. This campaign far outweighs the Enterprise-Boxer mid-coast sea fight that was covered in detail. And the author does a disservice to American privateers in general when he calls them "ill-disciplined" and not more than a "nuisance". There were a small percentage of rogues that can be described in this manner, of course, but for the most part, American privateers did great work (as Jefferson anticipated). Some 515 licensed privateers captured British prizes worth \$39 million; while the 22 U.S. Navy ships captured prizes worth \$6 million. In fact, by any measure, during the war, the privateersmen out-performed the U.S. Army. By congressional act, privateer owners were required to give bond with surety and the crews

followed all laws and treaties. U.S. Navy rank, duties, and rules applied. Continuing, it was disappointing to see one of the persistent War of 1812 myths repeated. Captain Lemuel Moody was said to be watching at least the smoke of the Enterprise-Boxer combat from his Portland observatory, spy-glass in hand. Physically impossible. The battle was 45 miles away. And if the curvature of the earth is not enough of an impediment to viewing, Casco Bay islands and Bald Head block the line of sight. Finally, Kerwin Waters was a midshipman when wounded, but a lieutenant when he died. Otherwise, certainly from the New Brunswick standpoint, the original research presented represents a worthwhile contribution to the wars literature.

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