



Gunfire Around the Gulf : The Last Major Naval Campaigns of the Civil War

Jack Coombe

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From 1861 to 1865, some of the most horrific land battles in history were fought at places called Shiloh, Antietam, and Gettysburg. But while the soil ran with blood, it was the lesser-known naval battles raging for control of the Gulf of Mexico--the lifeline of supplies and weapons to the Confederacy--that would determine the outcome of the Civil War.

In this vivid and powerful account, acclaimed historian Jack D. Coombe combines meticulous research with a breathtaking narrative to re-create the fierce naval battles for the ports around the Gulf, including those at New Orleans, Mobile Bay, and Vicksburg, with all the adventure and immediacy of a great novel. This is an extraordinary story of the ingenuity, daring, courage, and--all too often--human folly upon which the fate of a nation rested.

Coombe takes us inside the suffocating hulls of steam-powered ironclads shuddering under the impact of cannonballs and battering rams, into nights lit by the fires of burning ships, and into harrowing battles as gunships hammer away at each other from virtually point-blank range, often unable to tell friend from foe.

From the politicians, industrialists, and engineers on both sides who scrambled to build navies almost from scratch, to daredevil blockade runners and privateers, and from wily Confederate commanders such as Raphael Semmes, who bagged sixty-nine Union ships, to a virtually forgotten old naval officer from Tennessee named David Glasgow Farragut, whose bold and courageous leadership on behalf of the Union would become the stuff of legend, here are the stories of the men who made history.

Here, too, is a compelling look at the ships, strategies, and pioneering technology that proved the difference between victory and defeat: the potentially invincible Confederate ironclad *Tennessee*; the squat, ugly, much-feared *Manasses*; the South's explorations into torpedoes, fire rafts, and even the first successful submarine; and the Union's relentless drive upriver, braving hazards both natural and manmade to run a fearsome gauntlet of stone citadels bristling with firepower.

Filled with colorful historical characters and unparalleled battle scenes, **Gunfire Around the Gulf** is an important addition to the history of a little-known but crucial theater of the Civil War as well as a gripping and unforgettable read.

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