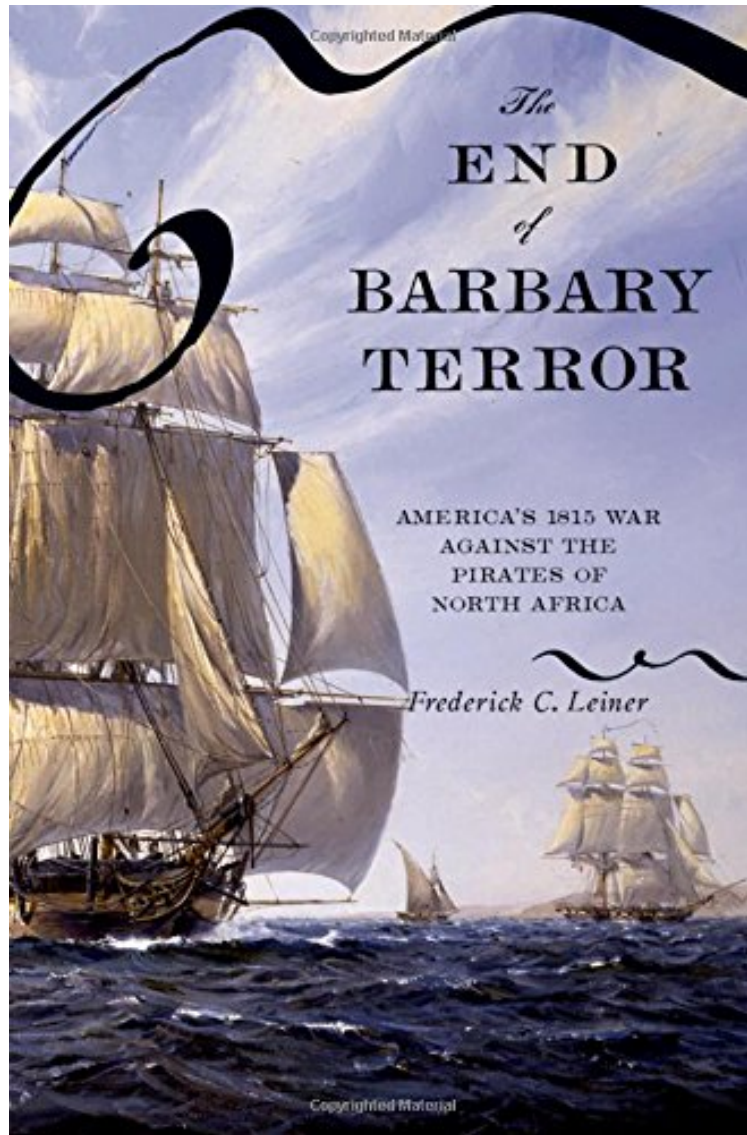


The End of Barbary Terror: America's 1815 War against the Pirates of North Africa

Frederick C. Leiner

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When Barbary pirates captured an obscure Yankee sailing brig off the coast of North Africa in 1812, enslaving eleven American sailors, President James Madison sent the largest American naval force ever gathered to that time, led by the heroic Commodore Stephen Decatur, to end Barbary terror once and for all. Drawing upon numerous ship logs, journals, love letters, and government documents, Frederick C. Leiner paints a vivid picture of the world of naval officers and diplomats in the early nineteenth century, as he recreates a remarkable and little known episode from the early American republic. Leiner first describes Madison's initial efforts at diplomacy, sending Mordecai Noah to negotiate. But when the ruler refused to ransom the Americans--"not for two millions of dollars"--Madison declared war and sent a fleet to North Africa. Decatur's squadron dealt quick blows to the Barbary navy, dramatically fighting and capturing two ships. Decatur then sailed to Algiers. He refused to go ashore to negotiate--indeed, he refused to negotiate on any essential point. The ruler of Algiers signed the treaty--in Decatur's words, "dictated at the mouths of our cannon"--in twenty-four hours. The United States would never pay tribute to the Barbary world again, and the captive Americans were set free. Here then is a real-life naval adventure that will thrill fans of Patrick O'Brian, a story of Islamic terrorism, white slavery, poison gas, diplomatic intrigue, and battles with pirates on the high seas.

From Publishers WeeklyThis unevenly paced military history gives an exhaustive portrait of the little-known war waged by the United States to stop the enslaving of American sailors by north African pirates. For centuries prior to the 1815 war, the kingdoms of Algeria, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli engaged in a system of state-sponsored piracy, capturing ships cruising the Mediterranean (and even raiding coastal European villages) and using the captors--Leiner estimates as many as a million Europeans had been enslaved--for slave labor in their home ports. When American sailors became targets, the U.S. government could either pay the ransom or go to war. Leiner does an excellent job of describing the personalities involved and depicting the heated naval battles, but the U.S.'s decisive and nearly immediate success in a very short war undermines Leiner's story; once the battles are over, the narrative drifts into the dull terrain of treaties and diplomacy, and the parallels Leiner notes between Islamic terrorism then and now fail to gel into any larger conclusion. Leiner is a talented writer and researcher, but the little-known campaign he chronicles fizzles out too quickly. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "The book recounts a stunning military success. With a mix of bravery and luck, Decatur defeated two enemy ships on his way to Algiers. Within 48 hours of arriving on the shore of the most powerful Barbary state, Decatur was able to force peace on American terms ('dictated at the mouths of our cannon,' as he later said). The U.S.'s infant Navy had scored a victory that had eluded European powers for nearly three centuries."--Jonathan Karl, Wall Street Journal"A fascinating account of what popular historians now refer to as America's first war against state-sponsored terrorism....Leiner, drawing on everything from ship logs, journals, and love letters to published papers and official documents, writes of the squadron of ten ships that sailed into Barbary territory on June 17, 1815, and--in quick succession--defeated or captured the opposing Algerine warships."--Library Journal"Frederick C. Leiner's dramatic history of Stephen Decatur's mission to Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli in 1815 is not only a vivid narrative of America's largest and most successful overseas expedition during the Age of Sail, it is also an illuminating micro-history of the culture, politics, and personalities of America's first war against state-sponsored terror."--Craig L. Symonds, author of *Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles That Shaped American History*"A solid study written in a lively style about the role of the U.S. Navy and State Department in terminating state-sponsored piracy in the Mediterranean."--The Journal of Military History"Frederick Leiner's *The End of Barbary Terror* is not only an exciting and well-told sea story, but a well-researched reminder that with regard to transnational terrorism, the only thing new in the world is the history that you don't know."--Dr. John F. Lehman, former Secretary of the Navy and member of the 9/11 Commission, and author of *On Seas of Glory: Heroic Men, Great Ships, and Epic Battles of the American Navy*"Frederick Leiner has taken an almost forgotten moment in early U.S. history--the 1812 capture by Algerines of an obscure Yankee sailing brig--and by focusing exclusively on that incident and the events deriving from it has woven a remarkably complex yet totally coherent tapestry of the times. There are heroes and villains galore, mysterious secret agents and conniving heads of state; there are wars and other international crises, numerous historical set pieces and acts of derring-do. All told, there's enough spectacle and drama to satisfy any reader."--James Tertius de Kay, author of *A Rage for Glory: The Life of Commodore Stephen Decatur, USN*About the AuthorFrederick C. Leiner is a lawyer and historian who lives in Baltimore, Maryland. He is the author of *Millions for Defense: The Subscription Warships of 1798*, which David McCullough praised as "first rate--well researched, well written, and very welcomea fascinating chapter in American naval history."